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THE INDEPENDENT

No 2,936

16 MARCH 1996

16p 50p

Police to interview boys as evidence emerges of 20 obsessive years **Hamilton's evil network**

STEVE BOGGAN
and JOHN MCKIE

Thomas Hamilton spent 20 years spreading a network of clubs for young boys across Scotland, playing a game of cat and mouse with officials who repeatedly tried to stop him.

As recently as last week, the 43-year-old loner gathered youngsters as young as eight for "football training" - which involved showing them his gun catalogue and offering them presents.

Councils across central Scotland had heard of Hamilton, his penchant for young boys, his weekends away at camp and the complaints he invariably attracted from parents. But every time they rooted him out, he moved on somewhere else.

Yesterday it emerged that since his sacking as a Scout leader in 1974, Hamilton had set up his unofficial boys' clubs in at least 14 areas, including Bannockburn, Dunfermline, Falkirk, Alva, Balfour, Stirling,

were going swimming and provided them with his own trunks, but he never took them swimming, they went to the gym.

"One evening, he drove a few boys to Stirling but when one asked to go to the toilet, he wouldn't let him into the house."

"These kids are traumatised. Most of the kids are sleeping with their parents, they don't want to sleep alone. They're not getting counselling - they should be."

Detectives are next week to visit primary schools in the area to quiz children on the "football" groups held by Hamilton and his associate, Iain Boal, a PE student.

The boys, aged between seven and twelve, were stripped to the waist for the exercise sessions at the secondary school.

Hamilton, and Mr Boal, circulated leaflets at St Matthew's, Woodhill and St Helen's primary schools in Bishopbriggs.

On the leaflet, Hamilton called himself "Boys Sports Club Committee (President)". Mr Boal, who had gone to ground yesterday, called himself Club Football Coach, although the Scottish Football Association said he was not registered as a coach.

Numerous allegations were made about Hamilton's behaviour but no sexual misconduct was ever proven, despite inquiries by police covering the Falkirk, Alva, Linlithgow and Dunblane areas.

Central Regional Council tried to stop him leasing school halls for his clubs as early as 1984, after hearing about his ejection from the Scout Association. But its efforts were stymied when Hamilton appealed to the Ombudsman, the late Eric Gillett, who found in his favour, concluding that the allegations against him were "little more than gossip".

His MP, Michael Forsyth, now Scottish Secretary, sent a letter to Hamilton, saying: "Dear Mr Hamilton, thank you for sending me the commissioner's report. May I congratulate you on your success. I hope you will take steps to ensure this is given proper publicity."

He continued to run boys' clubs but his reputation always followed him. In 1989 he was run out of Linlithgow and in 1992 Dunfermline following complaints from parents. He took out a private lease on a school hall at Linlithgow Academy, but Lothian Regional Council refused to renew it.

After he set up the boys' club, some parents expressed concerns about the general atmosphere he created.

One father said: "He once told around 15 of them they

Twenty years in the shadow of a killer
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Linlithgow, Bishopbriggs, Bonnybridge and Dunblane.

The most recent was established in Bishopbriggs, on the outskirts of Glasgow, a location he knew would take him outside the Central Regional Council area where he was best-known.

His last class there, at Thomas Muir High School, was held on Monday night. He had been there since October, but was already arousing suspicion.

Sam Galbraith, the MP for the area, only found out about the classes yesterday from his constituents.

He said: "Hamilton was parading his gun catalogue on Monday night. If a boy did well, he would show them his gun catalogue. I understand he also used to take them swimming." Hamilton allegedly also offered presents to boys in his class.

One father said: "He once told around 15 of them they

JAMES CUSICK
and PETER VICTOR

The nation will unite tomorrow in silent grief and sympathy for the victims of the Dunblane massacre.

Suggestions that there should be a minute's silence on Mothers' Day to commemorate the dead were met immediately by an enormous groundswell of public support and unqualified backing from John Major.

The Prime Minister and the Labour leader, Tony Blair, buried party differences yesterday to represent the nation when they visited Stirling Royal Infirmary, one of the hospitals that dealt with the aftermath of the carnage.

Visibly shaken, the two politicians offered their thanks to the medical teams who treated

Hamilton's victims, and visited the child survivors of class primary one.

For many staff the visit was highly emotional: many burst into tears. Some hugged each other as they wept. The two politicians, wearing black ties, battled to retain their composure, and at one point Mr Blair seemed overcome.

The Prime Minister was accompanied by his wife, Norma, and the Secretary of State for Scotland, Michael Forsyth. Their arrival, together with Mr Blair and George Robertson, shadow Scottish Secretary, in one of the hospital's large conference rooms triggered an outpouring of emotion. Around 50 of the doctors, nurses, paramedics and ambulance teams that had been on duty on Wednesday met again for the

first time since the massacre and for many the occasion proved too much: many broke into tears and audible sobs.

After the visit, the Prime Minister told reporters of his admiration for the hospital staff.

"Over the last few days this com-

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ately that the scene of the massacre should be demolished.

The Queen also paid tribute to the people of Dunblane in a speech yesterday. Buckingham Palace announced that she had decided to bring forward to tomorrow her visit to the town, after hearing that some families will be holding funerals on Monday.

The Pope yesterday condemned the massacre as senseless violence and said he was "profoundly saddened" by the killings. A telegram to Bishop Vincent Logan of Dinkeldine said:

"The Holy Father offers fervent prayers for the families and friends of the victims and for all mourning their loss. He invokes God's consolations upon all those suffering as a result of this senseless violence and he sends this blessing."

The leaders spent almost an hour and a half with the children, their families and hospital staff before leaving to visit the scene of the massacre itself at Dunblane Primary School. Mr Major announced immedi-

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WEEKEND

Peter Brook
The greatest director we haven't got

The Lost Boys
Why men refuse to grow up

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ENTERTAINMENT

My father, the Hollywood star
Jamie Lee Curtis interviews Tony Curtis

IN BRIEF

Lawyer guilty of attack
A solicitor must pay a client's wife £1,000 after he was found guilty of assaulting her and imprisoning her in his office near Harrods.

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Israel to lift blockade
Israel is to lift the blockade of West Bank towns and villages which it imposed after the last suicide bomb in Tel Aviv. It was the most severe curfew imposed on the West Bank since the Gulf war.

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Today's weather
Sunshine, some showers and light winds.

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11



John and Norma Major, and Tony Blair add their wreaths to the thousands of floral tributes at Dunblane Primary School yesterday. Photograph: PA

Blair and Major unite in grief



MATHEW HORSMAN

Media Editor

More than 500,000 British households have agreed to spend £9.95 each to watch Frank Bruno battle challenger Mike Tyson for the world heavyweight boxing championship, to be broadcast this weekend on a pay-per-view basis only.

That translates into revenues nearly £5m, the bulk of which will go to BSkyB, Rupert Murdoch's satellite service, and the

holder of exclusive broadcast rights to the fight. As many as 2 million Britons are expected to watch the fight at home or with friends in what will be the country's first experience with pay-per-view television.

The revenue figures does not include sales to clubs, cinemas and pubs, which pay a higher rate. Many of these have been unable to extend their licences to serve alcohol at the 4am fight time. Although Tyson is the clear favourite, about 95

per cent of punters in Britain are backing Bruno, quoted at 3-1 by bookmakers. Tyson, who has fought only twice against mediocre competition since serving a prison sentence for rape, is quoted at 1-5.

Cable operators who are taking a transmission feed from BSkyB to deliver the fight to their customers also stand to earn revenues. Only Videotron has refused to offer the event, citing "technical" issues.

Additional sales could be

ring up today, when the price rises to £14.95. On the basis of sales to date, 10 per cent of all cable and satellite homes in Britain have taken up the pay-per-view offer. A take-up rate of 8 per cent for such programmes is considered a success in the US, where pay-per-view is well established.

BSkyB's decision to broadcast the fight on PPV was harshly criticised by many in the media, who argued that subscribers already pay hefty sub-

scription fees and should not be asked to pay more. Many predicted the experiment would fail.

A rival broadcaster said: "It is clearly a fantastic level of response, despite all the bad publicity surrounding Sky's decision to charge extra for the fight. But if they can't do it with the biggest fight in decades, then nothing would have worked."

BSkyB declined to comment on the sales. "We are pleased

with the response," a spokeswoman said.

The controversial decision to

air the fight on a pay-per-view basis is being watched closely by other broadcasters, including the ITV companies, and by advertisers, who have been concerned that PPV and other forms of subscription television could threaten advertising on commercial television. Sky has said it will show the without commercial interruption.

Ken Jones, page 32

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Gun users 'should have medical note'

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

The Government is facing growing demands for tougher medical tests before gun enthusiasts can obtain gun licences.

It has urged MPs to await the outcome of the inquiry by Lord Cullen, a Scottish judge.

But there was mounting pressure last night for action, including a requirement for a medical note to be attached to all gun licences, but it was rejected.

Doctors expressed anger that the Government had failed to close the loophole under which gun owners who may be known to GPs to be mentally unstable can still obtain gun licences.

It also emerged that ministers bowed to the pressure from the

gun lobby in Britain after the Hungerford killings to prevent changes which might have helped to avoid the Dunblane massacre.

"We put down an amendment for a medical note to be attached to all gun licences, but it was rejected. At the moment, you are asked if you are unstable, tick a box, 'yes' or 'no'.

That is completely inadequate," one informed Labour source said.

Doctors expressed anger that the Government had failed to close the loophole under which gun owners who may be known to GPs to be mentally unstable can still obtain gun licences.

The Labour source said the demands for the reform of the gun laws after the Dunblane incident were muted by the cross-party expression of mourning, but there were signs of a powerful campaign emerging for radical changes.

The pressure switched from the Secretary of State for Scotland, Michael Forsyth, to Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, to bring in tougher gun laws to make sure that the slaughter is not repeated in England.

Conservative MPs, who have gun clubs in their constituencies, urged the Government to reject growing calls for a total ban on

hand guns, but there was support for a tightening of the rules to limit gun enthusiasts to a maximum of one hand gun each with tougher medical checks.

Tony Banks, a Labour backbencher, said there should be a ban on all automatic and semi-automatic weapons, including pistols: "We need to have more rigorous tests on applications.

Psychiatric tests as well as criminal record tests should be implemented and only one gun should be possessed."

"The House of Commons has a gun club but not a creche. We have got the wrong sense of priorities here."

The controls were clearly in place, but there was support for a tightening of the rules to limit gun enthusiasts to a maximum of one hand gun each with tougher medical checks.

Some senior Conservative

MPs said they were astonished that the killer, Thomas Hamilton, could have obtained licences for four handguns.

Tory MP Edwin Currie, a past member of the Commons gun club, also opposed a blanket ban on hand guns. He told *The Independent*: "There is need to answer how this guy was allowed to have four hand guns. We should restrict the number

of guns they can have. I would be a little anxious about any suggestion that all guns should be kept in clubs, where they might be vulnerable to theft."

Michael Coven, the Tory MP and president of a gun club at the House of Commons, said he was not in favour of banning shooters from using hand guns.

"There is a case for holding these hand guns at gun clubs rather than leaving them in the possession of individuals," he said.

A number of MPs and police use the Commons shooting club – in the basement where Guy Pilkington planned the gunpowder plot.

Most use target rifles, but it was recently expanded to allow hand guns to be used.

It also emerged yesterday that ministers considered invoking civil emergency procedures to deal with the slaughter but, tragically, there were too few survivors.

Some senior Conservative

Party figures were dismayed at

John Major's joint visit with

Tony Blair, the Labour leader, to the area.

Although the move was

praised in Dunblane, in London, Conservative sources

were furious because they felt

it gave Mr Blair a political

bonus.

Cullen
clears
way for
inquiry
to begin

MARY BRAID

Lord Cullen, the distinguished judge who will head an inquiry into the massacre, met Scotland's chief law officer and its most senior judge yesterday to discuss the inquiry's remit.

The meeting between Lord Cullen, Lord Mackay of Drummond, the Lord Advocate, and Lord President Hope did not set a date for the start of the wide-reaching inquiry, but those involved are said to be keen to start as soon as possible.

The meeting was necessary because the inquiry may cover some of the same issues as the statutory Fatal Accident Inquiry which must also be held.

The accident inquiry – the equivalent of a coroner's court hearing – must be held by law in Scotland when it appears that death has resulted from an accident at work, or while a person was in legal custody, or when the Lord Advocate believes an inquiry to be in the public interest because the death was sudden, suspicious or unexpected and occurred in circumstances which give rise to serious public concern.

In Scotland, the Procurator Fiscal, the public prosecutor, investigates the circumstances and applies to a local sheriff to hold an inquiry. The Procurator Fiscal is also responsible for investigating sudden death.

As part of his inquiry, the sheriff is allowed to consider if there were precautions which might have been taken so that death could have been avoided. He can look at any facts relevant to the case. The sheriff sits alone, although he may appoint a specialist assessor to assist, and he bears evidence in public. There is no jury.

Lord Cullen, 60, who presided over the 1988 inquiry into the Piper Alpha disaster, became a court of session and High Court judge 10 years ago. He has just spent a week considering whether a Scottish hospital can lawfully withdraw treatment from a woman patient who has been in a coma for three years.

His cool-headed intelligence has won him many admirers. There was widespread praise for the handling of the Piper Alpha inquiry which took 13 months and resulted in a comprehensive 500-page document. The report is regarded as one of the finest documents produced for a government on such a complicated issue, and 106 of his recommendations were accepted.

In his inquiry into the events at Dunblane he is expected to consider the adequacy of current firearms legislation, including the granting of firearm certificates, and details concerning the background of the killer Thomas Hamilton.

New machine helped medics save injured

JAMES CUSICK

Specialist paediatric resuscitation equipment delivered to Stirling Royal Infirmary less than a month ago was crucial in saving the lives of those injured in the carnage at Dunblane, it emerged yesterday.

The vital role played by the equipment and the dedicated work of hospital staff were thanked by the Prime Minister and the Labour leader Tony Blair who visited the hospital yesterday. Central to all the stories of heroism they heard was the simple technique that enabled staff to put their emotions to one side.

The medical team's first job at the school was to check for signs of life. Those still alive were given priority. Dr Fleming praised the teachers: "They were superb. Even though they were distraught themselves they were comforting the children."

BBC to broadcast a weekend of prayers

The BBC is to broadcast a series of programmes from Dunblane this weekend.

The Mothering Sunday Songs of Praise will be replaced by a memorial programme and other radio and television slots will be devoted to reflection on the harrowing events of the past week.

BBC Head of Religious Broadcasting Ernest Rea said: "The BBC's Religious Broadcasting Department has a responsibility to share in the grief of the people of Dunblane and express the prayers of people both in this

country and all over the world." The morning service at Dunblane Cathedral will be broadcast live at 10.25am. The Songs of Praise replacement, called Dunblane - A Community Mourns, will contain extracts from the earlier service along with "meditations, reflections and specially recorded music".

Other schedule alterations include the Sunday Morning Service on Radio 4 which will come live from the Scottish Churches House in Dunblane at 9.30am.

ITV's Sunday schedule has not been specially revised.

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	£500+	2.05	1.41	—	—
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	£2,500+	8.25	6.00	—	—
Special Account	£2,500+	8.25	6.00	—	—
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	£5,000+	1.70	1.25	1.60	1.15
	£7,500+	2.70	1.95	2.60	1.80
	£10,000+	3.15	2.35	3.05	2.25
	£15,000+	4.50	3.35	4.40	3.15
	£20,000+	5.00	3.80	4.90	3.60
	£25,000+	5.50	4.00	5.40	3.70
Premier Deposit	£1,000+	0.25	0.19	—	—
	£1,000+	0.75	0.56	—	—
	£10,000+	3.50	2.65	—	—
	£25,000+	8.25	6.00	—	—
Preference following TESSA*	£1,000+	6.25	4.75	—	—
Including 0.75% p.a. Bonus	£1,000+	6.75	5.00	—	—
	£2,500+	7.00	5.25	—	—
	£5,000+	7.25	5.50	—	—
	£10,000+	7.50	5.75	—	—
	£20,000+	7.75	6.00	—	—
Preference following TESSA*	£1,000+	6.35	4.85	—	—
Including 0.75% p.a. Bonus	£1,000+	6.85	5.10	—	—
	£2,500+	7.10	5.35	—	—
	£5,000+	7.35	5.60	—	—
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	£20,000+	7.85	6.10	—	—
Special Account	£2,000+	5.75	4.35	—	—

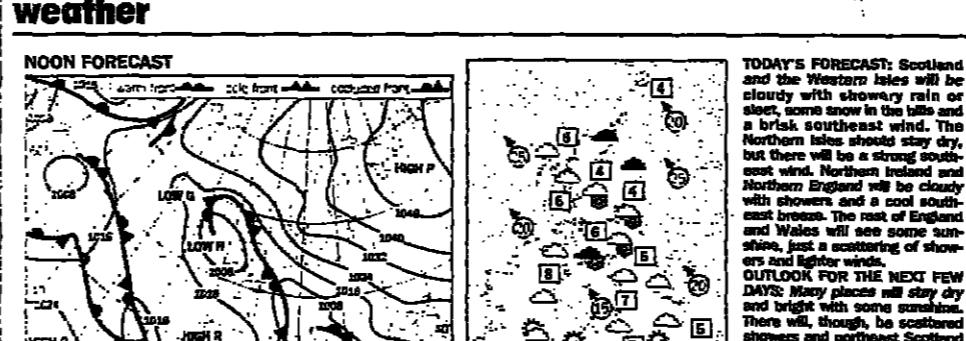
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	£10,000+	3.35	0.28	3.50	0.31
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Annual	£10,000+	3.75	0.31	3.95	0.34
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Photograph: Brian Harris

weather



WORLD WEATHER

Country	1	2	3	4	5
Angola	1.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25
Argentina	1.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25
Armenia	1.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25
Aruba	1.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25
Australia	1				

Cullen
clears
way for
inquiry
to begin

Amie suffers a relapse in hospital

PETER VICTOR

Stories of individual tragedy continued to emerge yesterday from the horror of the Dunblane massacre.

Trainee teacher Alison Curry was chatting outside the gates of Dunblane Primary after dropping off five-year-old Ryan when she heard gunshots ring out on Wednesday. She dashed through the school and was one of the first to arrive at the scene of devastation in the gymnasium. She found her son, alive, lying among the dead and injured.

Yesterday, as news of her appalling ordeal was released, she maintained a bedside vigil as Ryan lies critically injured in hospital. Ryan, who uses the surname Liddell, suffered multiple bullet wounds and was described as "stable" in Glasgow's Yorkhill hospital yesterday.

A neighbour of his mother's said: "We've only seen her briefly because she was at Ryan's side nearly all the time. I don't know what she saw in that school but she's really shocked. She wasn't saying much and her thoughts were elsewhere."

Concern grew yesterday for five-year-old Amie Adam who suffered a relapse at Glasgow's Yorkhill Hospital. Amie whose thigh was shattered by a bullet in the attack on Wednesday, collapsed yesterday lunchtime.

Last night she was admitted to a life-support machine.

Doctors would only release general medical details about Amie's condition. Medical director Dr Alister Miller said: "She is again seriously ill and has been returned to the intensive-care unit. This is disappointing after she had made such excellent progress after her initial treatment."

Dr Miller said: "Amie was having some routine attention to the plaster on her leg when she became unwell. He said: "Her colour changed and she was getting rather breathless so now she is receiving support with her breathing on a ventilator."

Amie underwent emergency surgery on her leg at Yorkhill on



Amie Adam, 5: Concern as she suffers a relapse

Wednesday night after the shooting. On Thursday she was moved out of intensive care to an orthopaedic ward and was said to be making good progress.

It is understood that bone marrow seeping into the child's bloodstream may have caused yesterday's relapse.

It emerged also that the sister of murdered teacher Gwen Maynard learnt of the tragedy after dropping off five-year-old Ryan when she heard gunshots ring out on Wednesday. She dashed through the school and was one of the first to arrive at the scene of devastation in the gymnasium. She found her son, alive, lying among the dead and injured.

Joan Bedford, mother of three, saw the news of the Dunblane disaster on television when she returned to the staff room for her break. Last night she, her husband and their children were in Scotland comforting Gwen's husband, Rodney.

Kath North, a pensioner who visited her granddaughter Sophie in Dunblane just days ago, returned home to Hertfordshire and then heard that the five-year-old had been one of the victims.

Yesterday Mrs North, 75, was being comforted by her daughter in Middlesbrough.

Mrs North, of Hitchin, spent last week visiting Sophie and her father in Dunblane. Sophie's mother died from cancer two years ago.

The elderly man who plays Santa Claus for the children of Dunblane said yesterday: "Christman is never going to be the same again."

Ton Allan, 65, of the Dunblane Community Council, told how last Christmas five-year-old Kevin Hasell, who died in the massacre, sat on his knee at a party at the Hillside Playgroup in Dunblane. Kevin sticks in my mind in particular.

I remember him because he went to the playgroup party for three Christmases on the trot. He was one of the shy ones and I used to make a particular effort to speak with him.

I asked him what he would want for Christmas that year. He said, in a little voice: "What ever you could manage please."

Mr Allan said he also recalled another victim, five-year-old Victoria Clydesdale, because she had visited a charity grotto in the high street.

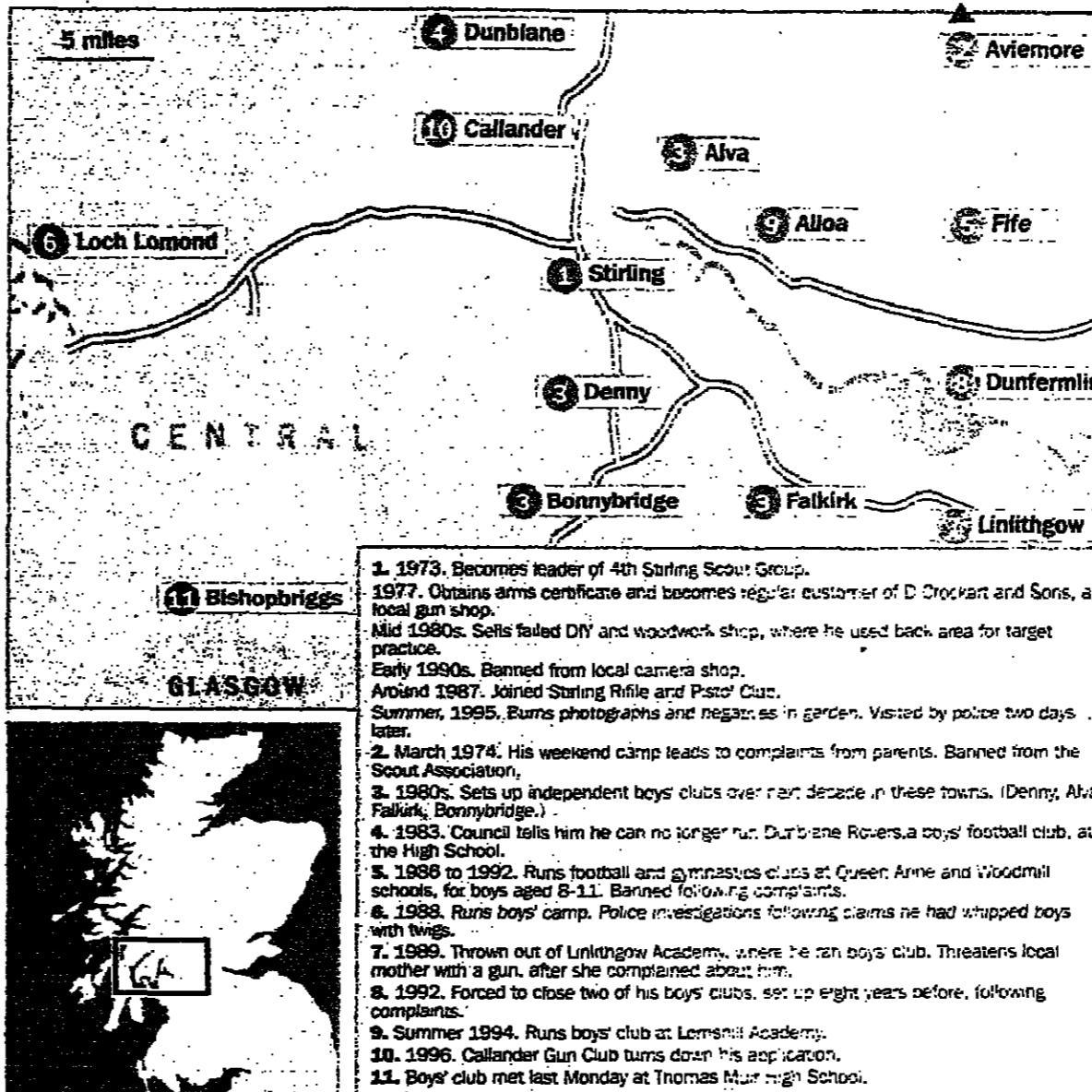
She sat on my knee and I remember that she said to me: she did not mind at all what she was getting. She and her brothers and sisters got all the presents they wanted ... She was a beautiful little girl, a cheery little soul and very outgoing.

Mr Allan, who has been on the community council for four years, said his wish was now to make Dunblane a better place for future children. He hoped cash could be found for a swimming pool and possibly a new community centre.

At the moment he could not bear to think about next Christmas, but his Santa Claus outfit would be waiting if he was called for.

AFTER THE MASSACRE

Twenty years in the shadow of a killer: Hamilton's obsessive trail across Scotland



'He would tell them not to tell his secrets to parents'

FROM PAGE 1

"There was nothing specific about sexual misconduct, just the general feeling," said a council spokesman.

Local MP Tam Dalyell became involved after a parent in the constituency, Paula Morbey, became suspicious. She said yesterday: "My son joined a sports academy of his and I hoped he'd take their tops off and

in normal primary schools they never used to do that."

"He would tell them a secret and then tell them not to tell their parents. And of course my ten-year-old son James came home and told me straight away. We never saw any leaders apart from him."

"It was meant to be a range of sports but it was always gym work and he was using the

equipment so that he could handle the children."

After a battery of complaints from Mrs Morbey, the council took action.

Mr Dalyell, the MP for Strathkelvin and Bearsden, said: "I think it's fair to say we ran him out of Linlithgow pretty quickly. Unfortunately we seem to have landed him on someone else."

Fife Regional Council

banned his clubs at Queen Anne and Woodmill schools following complaints about a summer camp.

Again, these related more to a lack of supervision than sexual misconduct - "we just felt there was something wrong", a spokeswoman said - and again Hamilton appealed to the Ombudsman. But that time he failed.

Council officials repeatedly

tried to stop Hamilton taking out leases on school halls but he kept one step ahead. He would give school caretakers bottles of whisky in return for being tipped off when night-time vagrancies arose.

One source told the *Independent*: "The officials responsible for letting school halls did everything they could under the legislation, but perhaps the

legislation isn't strong enough. They feel terrible about what happened."

Sam Gilbrath, MP for Strathkelvin and Bearsden, still cannot believe that the man was with children from his constituency just 30 hours before the massacre. "I'm just flabbergasted that it was going on and it has taught me a lesson. You just have to be careful."

Mystery of the student trainer

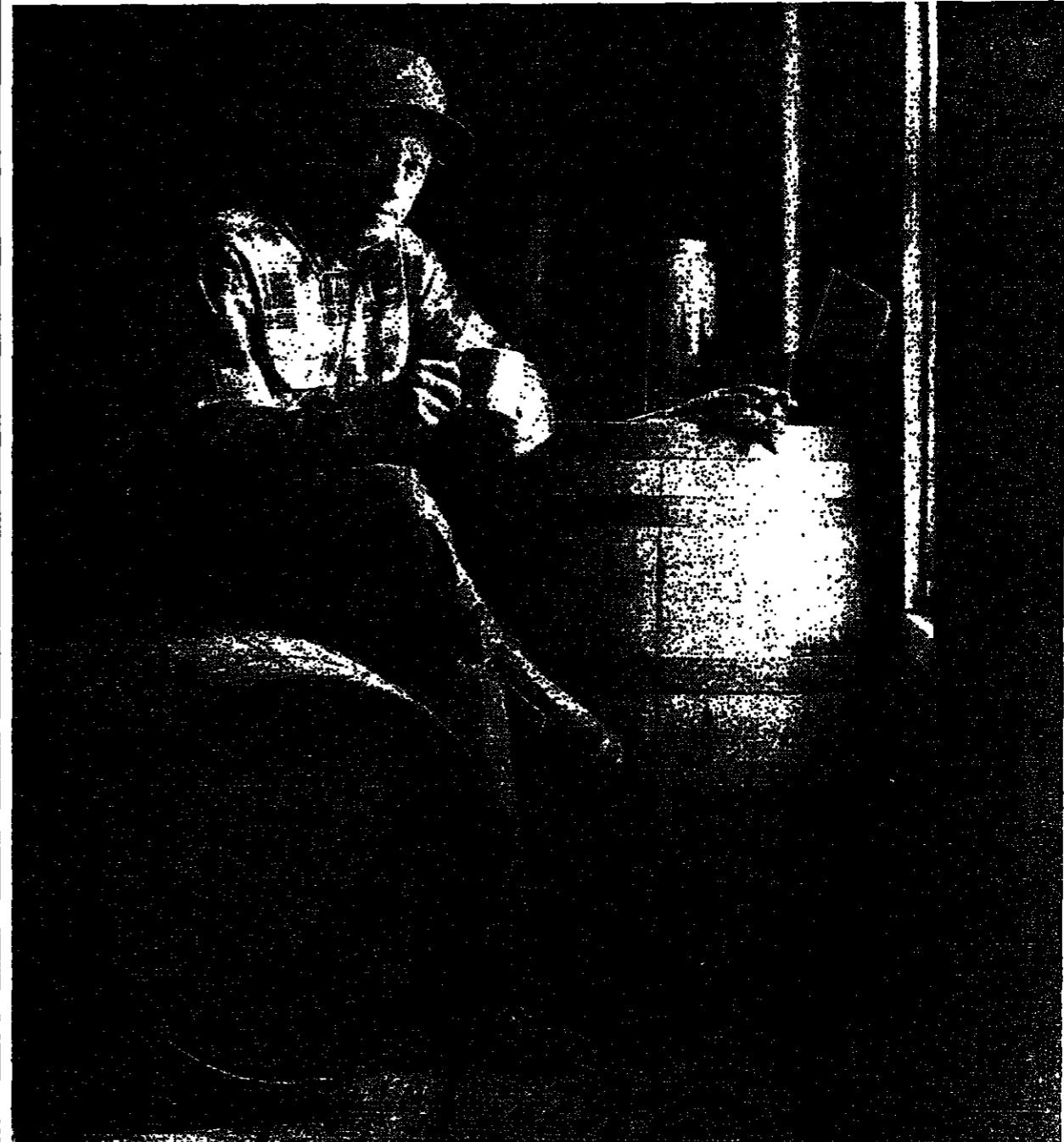
JOHN MCKIE and STEVE BOGGAN

I started off with a leaflet round primary schools about a five a side football club. It ended with the massacre of 16 schoolchildren, a teacher and a suicide.

While the life of Thomas Hamilton has been well-documented, the other name on the leaflet advertising for young recruits remains a mystery.

Little is known of *Iain Boal*, whose name, address and telephone number appears on the leaflet beside Hamilton's. He advertises himself as "Club Football Coach" but neither Dumbarston's manager Jim Fallon nor the council's former head of youth football coaching had heard his name before.

The Scottish Football Association confirmed that he had taken part in training sessions



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JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE WHISKEY

Major promises money for gym to be pulled down

JAMES CUSICK

The gymnasium at Dunblane primary school is to be pulled down. John Major, who visited the town yesterday and who laid a wreath at the school gates alongside Opposition leader Tony Blair, promised that government money would be provided to redevelop the site.

During a tour of the school, after he had visited Stirling Royal Infirmary, Mr Major announced his preference for the gym's future in stark terms: "They must pull it down," the Prime Minister said.

The school's headmaster, Ron Taylor, who accompanied

the two politicians on their visit inside the school, then asked Mr Major if he would provide the money. The Secretary of State for Scotland, Michael Forsyth, responded: "Of course we will."

The future of the building has been under discussion by the area's education authority, Central Region. Some authority officials believed that to destroy the school gym would be an act that would accomplish little.

The region has been taking advice from clinical psychologists on what effect the building, if it remained in place, would have on the minds of the school's pupils. However, views

expressed by friends of the bereaved families to demolish the hall have been partially accepted by the school's governing body.

Yesterday, the chairman of the board of governors, Michael Robbins, said: "The school is open and available to those parents and any relatives who feel they have a need to go inside and visit the gymnasium."

Mr Robbins said many clearly saw the gym as a "focal point of grief" but that once that process was over "the gym really should be demolished". He added: "We understand that Mr Major has offered the money for it to be demolished and

more importantly to be redeveloped."

Just what form that redevelopment will take - whether the gymnasium will be rebuilt or whether the area occupied will be turned into some form of memorial - is not yet clear.

However, Mr Robbins, expressing the wishes of the school board said: "We want to move away from any idea of a granite slab memorial."

It is understood that a form of memorial more appropriate than the images that the children of the school could gather strength from is being considered.

Mr Robbins said: "One of the ideas is that we have some sort of garden area - a quiet area for children."

Commenting on Mr Major and Mr Blair's visit, Mr Robbins said that the atmosphere inside the school was "very sombre". He said the two men behaved "more like parents than politicians".

The governors have decided to reopen the school for classes next Friday following the Queen's visit to the Perthshire town tomorrow and the first of the funerals, possibly on Monday.

"They will then have time

to be back at school for one day

followed immediately by the

weekend. It will then only be

one week at school before the

Easter holidays," Mr Robbins said.

Writing 'revealed a volcano'

A sample of Thomas Hamilton's handwriting has been studied to see whether it revealed any insights into his mind.

Top graphologist Frits Cohen said that the handwriting painted a picture of a "logical, but obsessive man with an inferiority complex".

At the same time, he added, it showed a man with intense passion and desires which he kept "bottled inside".

Studying a letter written by Hamilton to Michael Forsyth,

he said the handwriting clung to the past "but was determined and deliberate in his actions".

"He was a volcano. This man had bottled up tensions and did not know how to deal with them. His outburst comes because he could not cope with these tensions."

Mr Cohen said that he had an inferiority complex and was narrow-minded, "but underneath it all he was a warm, full-blooded man who was probably sexually frustrated".

IN BRIEF

Missing ferry skipper inquiry

Shipping giant P&O was criticised an investigation of the captain of a freighter which was missing in the ice off the coast of St Edmunds, Suffolk, although it had been given a date on Thursday, the *Evening Standard* was told. There is believed to be enough evidence to prosecute.

On your Marks

More than 100 people in the Czech Republic have been given an environmental prize for a recycling scheme.

Singer's debts due

The singer's debts are due to be paid off by the end of the month.

Illness' hotel shut

The hotel has been closed due to an outbreak of the disease.

Porsche winner

The car has been won by a man from Germany.

Watchdog report: Calls for stiffer laws on labelling

Green product claims 'mislead consumers'

GLENDA COOPER

"Green" claims on many UK products are misleading, meaningless or even downright dishonest, a consumer watchdog warned yesterday.

The confusion over environmental benefits of household products is so ripe that the National Consumer Council fears that many people may give up trying to buy green altogether.

The report, *Green Claims*, published to coincide with World Consumer Rights day, says that existing legislation fails "to tackle misleading claims on products".

Many claims made by manufacturers were woolly and vague. This included toilet roll which claimed to be "softer on the environment" and stationery made with "environmentally conscious paper".

Others were meaningless,

such as "biodegradable" washing powders (all United Kingdom detergents exceed European Union standards on biodegradability anyway) or they disguised environmental hazards such as CFC-free products whose replacement product is just as dangerous.

The organisation also derided "recyclable" claims because in theory "almost anything is", and in practice very few local councils have the facilities to recycle. "Unless the consumer takes them to a special collection centre, the claim will be meaningless," the report said.

Logos - popular ones included globes, caring hands, streams and mountains - are also misleading shoppers who find it impossible to distinguish between official marks of approval and manufacturers' marketing tools. This simply increased shoppers' scepticism

and confusion, the report said. Environmental claims in advertising have been fairly well-regulated. But existing laws fail to tackle misleading claims on products and packaging. Prosecutions are taken up through the Trade Descriptions Act of 1968 by officers who have to prove the claim is false. To date there have only been four successful prosecutions.

"The situation is a real mess," said David Hatch, chairman of the NCC. "It's as much about what the label doesn't say as about what it does. As Robert Louis Stevenson said the cruel lies are often told in silence."

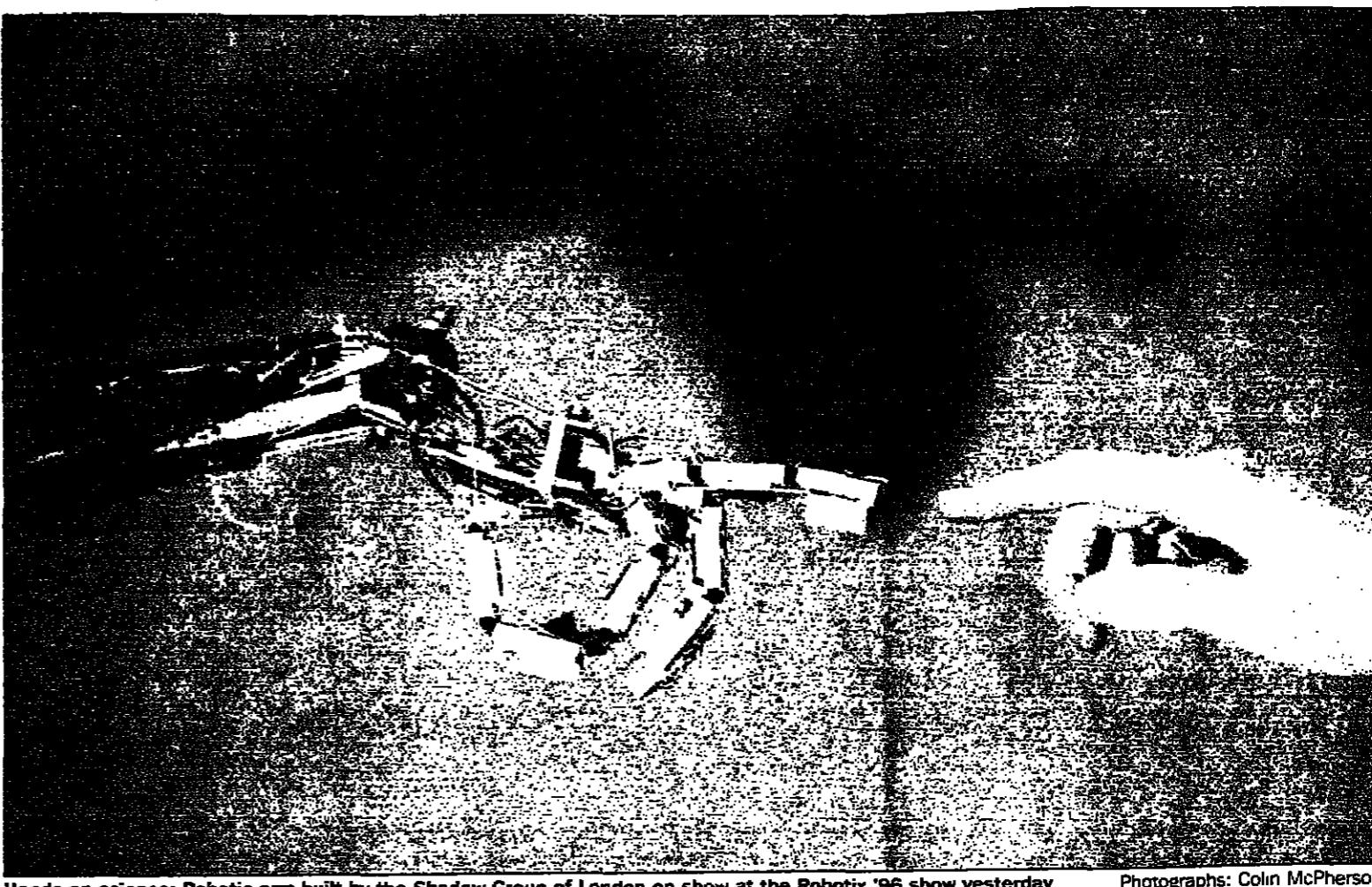
The NCC is calling for the introduction of a new code of practice backed by a reformed Act and a co-ordinated consumer education campaign.

It also supported the EU "ecolabel" which identifies products less harmful to the environment, and the energy label, which provides information on energy efficiency.

But Mr Hatch warned: "They are being crowded out and valued by other labels displaying meaningless, cunning and deceptive symbols with weasel words and specious claims."

The Environment Minister James Clappison said that the Act was still a safeguard against demonstrably false claims. "However, the NCC report suggests that the Act is of limited effect in dealing with 'green products' claims. . . . The Government prefers to make progress here by stimulating the market to work better, rather than by adding to regulation."

The supermarket chain Tesco said it welcomed the report and backed the proposal to regulate claims. And Keith Chesterton, director-general of the Soap and Detergent Industry Association, insisted the introduction of compact detergents, which cut down on transport and packaging costs, showed that there was concern in the industry.



Hands-on science: Robotic arm built by the Shadow Group of London on show at the Robotix '96 show yesterday

Photographs: Colin McPherson



Mr Tilden's solar-powered butterfly, prototype of a spacecraft

Minesweeping robots apply to the US Army

CHARLES ARTHUR
Science Correspondent

"I'm not aiming to populate the world with machines that will replace us, but with ones that will go where we don't want to," Mark Tilden said yesterday, as he watched one of his robot creations flop its way methodically across a table.

Despite his Indiana Jones hat, Mr Tilden is very serious: he is presently negotiating a contract which could mean that by the end of the year, some of his robots will have a job sweeping a United States Army testing range for unexploded munitions.

In years to come they could clear minefields in countries such as Vietnam, Korea, the Gulf states and any of 80 others where buried mines still pose a hazard to citizens.

The object isn't just to make machines that will find the mines, but to make them cheap, and be able to blow them up

without human control," he observed, as he showed off the "snakebot" - a four-sectioned, battery-powered robot about 2ft long, which propels itself along the ground sideways, by rotating its sections.

He plans to build a 7ft one: that would be ideal for finding mines as its weight would set them off. He is also devising a "walking machine" 5ft high, to perform the same function.

Mr Tilden, a biophysicist from the Los Alamos research laboratories in New Mexico, builds robots which diverge from the conventional concept of a shuffling humanoid with diodes for eyes and a grating voice.

Instead, he uses the minimum of parts (at most 24 transistors - "fewer than a radio") and gives them simple aims, such as to seek out bright light to power their solar cells. But once they can do that, he can give them more complex aims. More interestingly, he says, once they ex-

ceed about eight transistors, the machine's exact behaviour is unpredictable, though its goals remain the same.

If anyone says that his insect-like machines look ugly, he responds: "You can't have a minesweeping robot that looks cute. People will get attached to it, and then they won't send it out to do its job."

Mr Tilden was showing off some of his collection yesterday in Glasgow, at the Robotix '96 show in Barony Hall, Rottenrow. But while they might excel at finding mines, his devices are unlikely to compete in the events today, the "Robot Olympics", which include robots competing at javelin throwing, sumo wrestling, wall-climbing, rugby and sprinting.

Human athletes can probably rest on their laurels a little while longer, though. The present British robot javelin record is 2m - about 50 times less than the human one.

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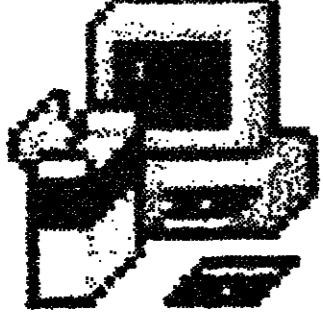
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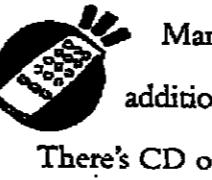
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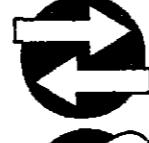
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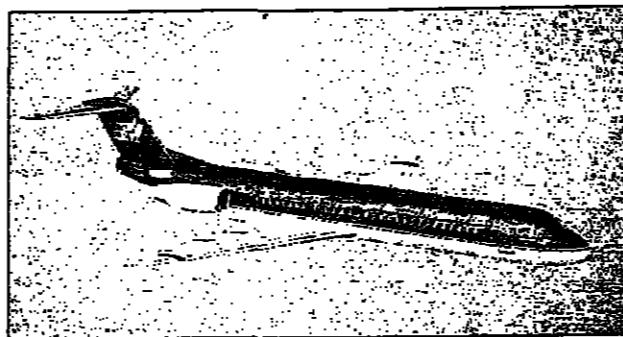
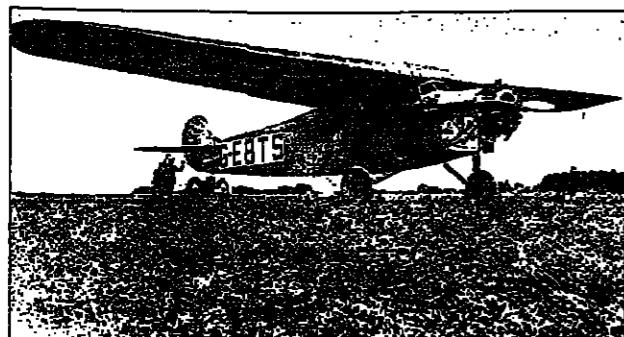


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news

Air industry crisis: UK firm lays off 660 with more to come as Dutch auction fails to save historic aircraft maker from bankruptcy



Flight through history: One of the first commercial Fokker passenger aircraft, left; the Red Baron, Germany's top fighter pilot in the First World War, who flew a military Fokker triplane; and a modern Fokker 70

PETER RODGERS
Business Editor

The collapse yesterday of Fokker, the Dutch aircraft manufacturer, put just over 1,000 jobs at risk at Shorts, the Belfast aerospace company.

The bankruptcy of Fokker led to the immediate lay-off of 660 workers at Shorts employed building wings for the failed company's aircraft. The future of several hundred other ancillary jobs is also threatened.

Shorts said it had already cut the number of jobs at risk from the 1,400 who were put on protective redundancy notice in January, when a Dutch government-backed attempt to save Fokker began.

Shorts added that it hoped to reduce the number of redundancies among its workforce of 6,800 to below 1,000 by redeployment and training schemes until new orders came in.

It is feared hundreds of jobs in supply companies could be hit, while City sources said the bankruptcy could cost Rolls-

Royce, which makes engines for Fokker, up to £30m. Rolls said it was too early to say whether jobs would be lost.

Shorts has been told that some Fokker 100/700 aircraft are to be completed over the next three months, which will provide some work.

A spokesman for Shorts, which is owned by Bombardier, a Canadian engineering and aerospace group, said: "We are now vigorously exploring a range of measures to limit the effect of Fokker's bankruptcy. In addition we are continuing to pursue new business opportunities which include several UK government defence pro-

grammes for which we are currently bidding."

Shorts has insisted throughout the Fokker crisis that its future is safe because Bombardier has injected £200m since 1989 to pay for diversification and new technology.

The failure of two Far Eastern buyers to come up with offers to buy Fokker finally killed off the company after desperate late night negotiations on Thursday with Samsung of South Korea. "This means the end of 77 years of aircraft history in the Netherlands," said Ben van Schaik, Fokker's chairman.

The company was put in the

hands of administrators in January when its controlling shareholder, Daimler-Benz of Germany, withdrew support because of mounting losses. But Fokker was given Dutch government bridging finance to keep it alive as talks with potential buyers continued.

At Fokker, more than 5,600 workers involved in aircraft manufacture will be dismissed, the largest single redundancy in Dutch history. But 960 will be offered jobs at the remaining divisions that escaped collapse. A number of viable businesses employing 2,500 staff in aircraft maintenance, electronics systems and special products will

be lumped into a company called Fokker Aviation. However, the rump company will still need new backing, Fokker said.

Samsung Aerospace said: "We were interested in Fokker, as a strategic tie-up... But we were not able to make the final offer due to time constraints." Hans Wijers, Dutch economics minister, said of the talks: "The only thing we got was a letter which contained less commitment than earlier signals." A second suitor, China Aviation Industries, had earlier decided against an offer.

Since it was founded in 1919, Fokker has built more than 125 different types of aircraft.



Sign language: The logo at Fokker's Amsterdam HQ is covered up. Photograph: AP

Fokker fall threatens 1,000 jobs at Shorts

Leadership poll hit by Harman row

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

The MP for Newport West has tabled a call for the PLP next Wednesday to support moves to bring forward the Shadow Cabinet elections to July on a permanent basis.

The annual elections to the top Labour posts are only held in Opposition.

After an initial period of office, a Labour prime minister is free to pick whom he chooses for the Cabinet.

Supporters of the move to bring forward the elections believe holding them in July would allow the frontbench team to prepare for an early general election or an autumn assault on the Queen's Speech and the final Budget.

It would also avoid the distraction of campaigning for a Shadow Cabinet poll in November.

It was instructed this week to review the rules for the annual Shadow Cabinet elections before the next general election.

The aim of the review was to give Mr Blair a freer hand to fight the general election.

However, senior Labour sources said opinion has hardened so much since the Harman row that pressure to suspend this year's annual Shadow Cabinet elections has been reversed.

Senior Labour sources said the Labour backbench is determined to bring forward the elections from November to July, threatening Ms Harman being kicked off the Shadow Cabinet.

The Harman row has also hardened backbench opinion against any change in the rules under which Mr Blair must take those elected in the Shadow Cabinet elections into his first Cabinet. He could co-opt Ms Harman into the Cabinet if she fails to gain a place in the Shadow Cabinet this year but Mr Blair would face serious criticism if he did so.

"Any resiling from the principle that the same people who are elected should go into the Cabinet is just not on. There would be a revolt in the PLP. It is feeling pretty touchy," said one Shadow minister.

Doug Hoyle, chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party, was asked this week to review the rules for the Shadow Cabinet elections as part of a wider review of preparations for Labour taking office. Yesterday he denied the move for a change had anything to do with the Harman row.

Demands for the elections to be suspended have been formally dropped and Paul Flynn,

Record damage teacher hurt by

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Walkman 'could be clipped to bag'

A 64-year-old Court of Appeal judge was told yesterday that he does not have to wear a Sony Walkman on his belt - he could clip it on his handbag.

There was bemused laughter from Lord Justice Hohhouse's two fellow judges as he peered over his spectacles at the Japanese stereo device and remarked: "I do not think so."

The three judges, whose average age is 66, are being asked to decide whether the Walkman - the electronic success story of the 1980s, which brought in £3bn sales worldwide - was invented by the son of a German industrialist.

Andreas Pavel, 51, took out a patent in 1977 - two years before the Walkman was launched - for a "portable stereo listening device" to be worn on a belt.

Anthony Watson QC, for Sony, was trying to show that the Walkman, although fitted with

a clip, was rarely worn on a belt but mostly fixed on a lapel or dropped in a pocket.

He handed an example up to the judges but it was fitted with a loop and Lord Justice Hohhouse remarked: "You could not use this other than for putting on a belt."

Mr Watson replied: "Well, my Lord, you could put it on your handbag."

Mr Pavel wants Lord Justice Hohhouse, Lord Justice Neill and Lord Justice Aldous to overturn a ruling in the County Patent Court in 1990 that his patent was invalid.

If he is successful, he will claim royalties of up to £100m from Sony and Toshiba for sales in Britain alone.

If he fails, however, he will face legal costs of up to £1m.

Judgment was reserved and is expected to be delivered at the end of next week.

news

Supplier to Iraq is let off £1/2m tax bill

CHRIS BLACKHURST
Westminster Correspondent

A businessman named in the Scott report for exporting explosive equipment to Iraq who ran up debts of almost £1m because Saddam Hussein refused to pay him when the Gulf war broke out, has had an unpaid tax bill of more than £500,000 set aside by the Inland Revenue and is applying for government grants to fund his latest £4m venture.

Mel Blackburn, who ran Global Technical & Management Services, a Scottish company which supplied Iraq with hi-tech equipment for clearing anti-personnel mines, is appealing to his creditors not to make him personally bankrupt.

If they push him under, he argues, he will be unable to remain the driving force behind Tristan, a project to build ocean-going yachts to take deprived children from Liverpool on sailing trips.

Tristan is a charity but there is a bonus for Mr Blackburn if it takes off: if it has contracted to buy the yachts from his boat-building company and the order should generate enough cash for him to pay off some of his Iraqi debts.

The IR has agreed to waive £574,000 of his admitted total tax liability of £659,000 and has allowed him to repay £35,000 over two years. He will plead with the other creditors, who are owed £265,000, next Wednesday, at a meeting in the Travellers Rest Hotel in Warrington, Cheshire. A copy of his letter to them has been sent to the *Independent*.

In it, Mr Blackburn admits that Global Technical Management Services was forced to cease trading as a result of the Gulf war. At that stage it was owed £5m by Iraq for "engineering services", described in the Scott report as a contract to clear Iraqi waterways of mines and train Iraqis in

removing mines.

Part of the contract, said Scott, included the supply of explosive detonator transponders, which required an export licence. No application for a licence was made and, said Scott, it should have been.

In his personal statement to creditors, Mr Blackburn says the "main thrust" of the company's business was in Iraq. At the outbreak of the Gulf war, all contracts were suspended, the company stopped trading, all staff were laid-off and Global lay dormant.

For the first two years he lived off his savings and has since been receiving income support and picking up occasional consultancy work to get by. There is little chance, writes Mr Blackburn, of getting paid by Iraq.

He writes: "Following the Gulf war my financial affairs were investigated by the Inland Revenue and HM Customs & Excise particularly since I had failed to disclose income from abroad which had been paid into offshore bank accounts and VAT had been claimed on exports which HM Customs & Excise considered to be 'outside the scope'."

Since 1991, says Mr Blackburn, he has been co-operating with the IR, "and I agreed a final tax liability of £659,000". The IR, he says, was willing to accept £25p in the £ or £25,000 to be paid over two years.

He also owes £170,671 to Forward Trust Limited, the finance company which is now petitioning for his bankruptcy.

In all, nine businesses and individuals are listed as creditors.

Tristan Sailing, his private company, has contracted to sell to Tristan Trust, the charity, six yachts worth £4m, leaving Tristan Sailing with enough cash, he says, for him to pay all his creditors £25p in the £. But for that to happen, he says, it is vital he is not made bankrupt and is allowed to remain in charge.

Both the company and the trust, he writes, are receiving government cash from the Department of Trade and Industry and the Single Regeneration Budget.

"The company and the trust are formed as a result of my concept and it is vital that I retain full managerial responsibility and control ... for them to succeed."

The DTT's Liverpool office confirmed that Tristan had applied for funding. "They have applied for a regional grant," an official said.

Record damages for teacher hurt by child

A primary school teacher has received record compensation from her local education authority after being assaulted by a 10-year-old boy.

Hazel Spence-Young, who taught at the Frederick Bird Junior School in Coventry, received £82,500 for neck injuries which, six years later, required her to wear a surgical collar.

The out-of-court settlement was believed to be the largest sum paid for injuries to a teacher in a mainstream school.

Many teachers who have also suffered serious injury at the hands of violent pupils may now

follow her lead and sue their education authority.

The National Association of School Masters/Union of Women Teachers is expected to use the case of Mrs Spence-Young, 48, from Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, to highlight its campaign over rising violence against teachers.

The injured teacher claimed the school was negligent for not sending the boy, who had a history of bad behaviour, to a special school. Coventry Council did not accept liability, even though its insurance company had paid compensation.



Arms and the Ma'am: The opening of the new £42.5m Royal Armouries Museum in Leeds yesterday

Queen defends museum's move

A fiercely fought battle between north and south ended yesterday as the Queen celebrated the relocation of Britain's oldest museum, housed for centuries in the White Tower at the Tower of London, to its new, hi-tech, £42.5m home in Leeds.

Despite the scheme being denounced by critics as "little more than a theme park", the Queen endorsed the new Royal

Armouries Museum in Leeds as an appropriate place to display the national collection of arms and armour.

Speaking at the official opening, she urged people not to forget the horrors of war, adding:

"These horrors have given rise to great deeds, great poetry, great music and great art. The weapons of war, which can be as beautiful as they are terrible, are often of the very finest design and craftsmanship."



Gibson: Begging creditors to spare him bankruptcy

Code of secrecy masks phone number switch

Telephone codes for Reading are being altered in three weeks time only a year after the much heralded Phone Day transition changed national codes.

Ofcom, the industry watchdog, has agreed to the decision. The new code for the Berkshire town, 0189, will come in on 8 April. In contrast to the multi-million Phone Day publicity last April, Reading's new code has received no publicity and was revealed by a local television station.

Thousands of businesses which altered stationery and hoardings, repainted vans and

changed advertising last April face the same expense again.

Sandy Stephenson, who runs a data recovery firm, said she heard of the change during a business conversation. "I was just talking and this guy asked me if I knew about the phone code change ... I was astounded to be told the date."

Ofcom said the telephone companies had not revealed the date because they were not ready to go public. "The publicity will start at the beginning of parallel running when both codes will work. The final change will not be until January 1998."

Unions warn Labour over pay policy

BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

Unions have warned Labour that a Blair government could face damaging outbreaks of industrial unrest unless the party begins to thrash out a detailed policy on public-sector pay.

The stark warnings have been delivered in a series of private meetings in which senior Labour figures have been told that considerable expectations about the relative generosity of a Labour government may be building up among some state employees.

However, Gordon Brown's Treasury team have told union officials that they can expect a continuation of the present government's policy of maintaining wage bills at their current levels. Employees' representatives have been told that pay rises must be funded by improvements in efficiency, which unions equate with job losses.

Any extra money would be devoted to the creation of new jobs specifically aimed at improving services.

In a meeting last week of the Public Forum, which involves most of the Trades Union Congress's affiliates, unions warned that there would be "catch-up pressures of varying degrees of intensity among public-sector workers". While the TUC has no formal links with Labour, the warning is clearly aimed at the party leadership.

Unions have become increasingly frustrated with what

they see as Labour's "policy vacuum" over public services. Senior union officials have given their opinions explicitly in face-to-face meetings with Mr Blair. The Shadow Cabinet, however, has shown little inclination to fill the void, according to union sources.

The forum is attempting to evoke a united position on the public sector, which it will urge on the Labour leadership.

While union warnings on pay smack of "old Labour", the biggest unions are nevertheless showing signs that they have taken on board some of the new thinking.

The forum meeting last Tuesday agreed that a future government would have to ensure high quality public services. An internal TUC paper prepared for the meeting concedes that the "consumerist" pressures will be greater. It also accepts the inevitability of continuing stringency over public-sector financing.

Following consultation with unions, the TUC conceded that there was little support for a public-sector pay commission under Labour. Both the TUC and a Fabian Society pamphlet had floated the idea.

In a paper submitted to the forum, Unison, the largest public-sector union, said that instead of such a commission, unions should concentrate on the low-pay commission promised by Labour which would advise the government on the level of a statutory minimum wage.



Norwell Roberts: 'I think I have earned people's respect'

Queen's medal for first black policeman

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

London Transport hopes to extend the system to outer zones but cannot do so until automatic gates are installed at all stations.

It is also launching two other types of tickets, which will be available this month. Family Travelcards will be available for one or two adults accompanying up to eight children and will give a 20 per cent discount off the cost of individual one-day travelcards.

Passengers buying the carnet will receive a 10 per cent discount, getting 10 tickets valid for Tube travel in the central zone for £10 rather than £1.10 each.

The carnets are aimed at visitors to the capital and at regular users of central zone tickets.

London Underground hopes the carnets will save 15 to 20 million ticket transactions each year, reducing congestion at central stations. People using the tickets, which are valid for a year, will have to validate them at an automatic gate or special machine when entering the Tube system.

Tests are being carried out with "smart cards" which would replace existing tickets and enable LT to offer a much greater variety of fares and discounts.

Dismay at EU proposal for art sale levy

ROS WYNNE-JONES

London's auction houses have reacted with dismay to news that the European Commission has finalised proposals for a levy on the sale of contemporary artwork to be applied throughout the EU.

The adoption of the proposal, which is likely to be put forward at the Council of Ministers' next meeting, would mean contemporary European painters, sculptors and photographers were entitled to between two and four per cent of the sale price every time their artwork was sold, for up to 70 years after their death.

Artists are currently entitled to resale rights, referred to in the art world as "droits de suite", in most European countries. In the UK, Ireland, Austria and the Netherlands, however, artists receive nothing when their work changes hands.

Christie's, the auctioneers, said the scheme amounted to little more than a "social security levy" for artists. Anthony Browne, a director, said: "If we believe that artists are a very important species, which I doubt, then maybe we should find a special way to look after them."

Det Sgt Roberts, 50, based at Golders Green in north-west London, came to Britain from the Leeward Islands when he was nine years old.

He said he planned to retire next year.

"I intend to write a book about my experiences," he added. "It will be humorous, but there will be a bit of straight talking."

Latest figures show that the Metropolitan Police has 790 officers from minority ethnic groups - representing 2.8 per cent of its 27,700-member force.

In the rest of England and Wales, non-white officers make up 1.7 per cent.

In Scotland, the figure is 0.2 per cent.

Recent research has suggested it would take at least 20 years for the police to reflect the ethnic mix of the United Kingdom's population.

Rachel Duffield, chief executive of the Design and Artists Copyright Society (DACS) welcomed yesterday's decision at the European Parliament in Strasbourg. "Fine artists are different to other creators, such as musicians, because they sell their work often for a very low price and then, later, huge amounts of money are made for everybody but the artist."

DACS said that Sotheby's had added 5 per cent to their buyers' commission in 1992 and claimed the auction house was being hypocritical by opposing a levy that benefited artists.

The National Artists Association said it supported a move towards resale rights, although some artists shared the auction houses' concern that the new legislation might drive the contemporary art market out of Europe.

A spokesman for the Department of Trade and Industry said the Government could see no benefit in introducing the levy.

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news

By-election test for 'Tory unity' over Europe

The Staffordshire South East by-election gives the Tory party the chance to prove its new unity on Europe and turn the tide of electoral defeats, the Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind said on a visit to Tamworth, the constituency's main town.

"There have been divisions in the past," Mr Rifkind said. "What was significant this week was that the White Paper which I produced was welcomed across the spectrum of the Conservative benches."

He would not be drawn, however, on the electoral impact of the expected decision to promise a referendum as a condition of joining a single European currency. Would it help the Tory candidate, Jimmie James? "As I don't yet know what the conclusion is, I can't speculate on what its political effects might be," Mr Rifkind said.

Mr James is in favour of a referendum. If Parliament should decide that we should join the single currency, then I think a referendum would be a suitable way of gauging the public support," he said. But he added: "We want the best economic policy for our country. If that is that we should join a single currency, then well and good, but

The Government hopes the recent White Paper will help halt its run of poll defeats. John Rentoul reports

if not, we should not. I think the Prime Minister and the Chancellor have played it exactly right," he said. In the present Tory climate, an endorsement of Ken Clarke comes close to a political statement.

Paradoxically, it is Labour's

Ken Jenkins, the clear favourite to win the seat, who is marginally the most Euro-sceptical of the three main party candidates.

Mr Jenkins, leader of Tamworth council, said: "There are

conditions in the real economy

that must be met before we can

even contemplate whether we

can go into a single currency. But

I am very keen to ensure that all

the implications must be spelt

out – and if that means it can't

be done at a general election,

then we would have to look at

a referendum as a possibility."

Jennette Davy, the Liberal Democrat, was happy to be

described as a federalist, and

said she felt strongly about

"partnership in Europe".

The decision by Sir James

Goldsmith's Referendum Party

not to contest the by-election

means anti-EU voters must look

to Andrew Smith, 27, the UK

Independence Party candidate. He

claims the vote on 11 April "could

change the course not just of

British but of European history".

In practice, however, the politi-

cal significance of the by-election

in this prosperous seat is likely

to be that it will test the

extent to which economic re-

covery is feeding through to a

political recovery for the Tories.

Mr Rifkind insisted during his

visit on Thursday, that Labour

support for the European social

chapter and a minimum wage

threatened prospects for a town

which has more home owners

than Cheltenham, Chichester

and Tunbridge Wells. But the

depth of alienation against the

Government makes it unlikely

that the Tories will reverse their

run of by-election defeats.

Result at 1992 general election:

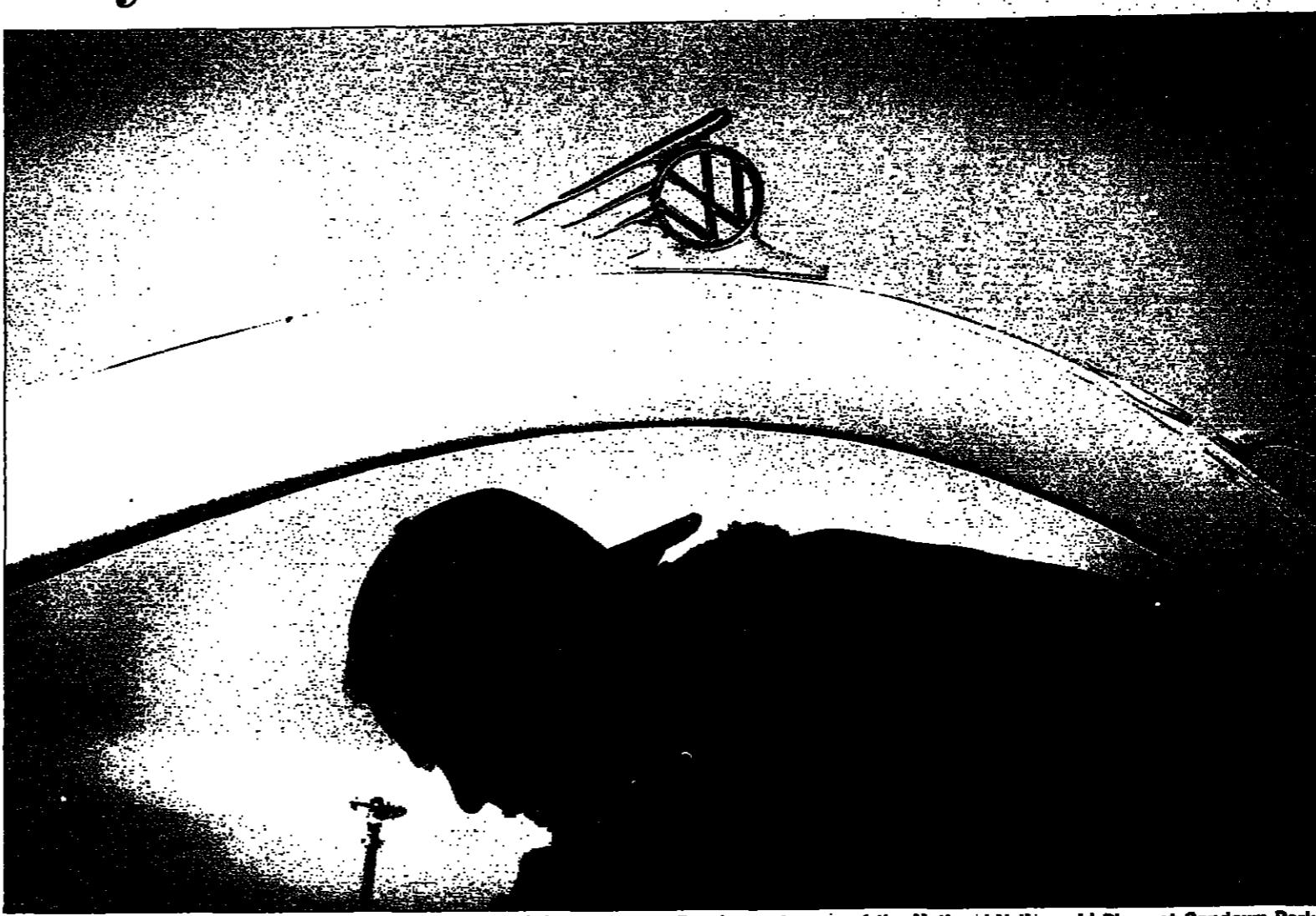
D. Lightbown (C) 29,180;

B. Jenkins (Lab) 21,988; N. Pen-

lington (LibDem) 5,540; J. Tay-

lor (SDP) 895. Maj 7192.

Eyes down for a weekend Beetle drive



Lifting the lid: Dean Richman inspects his 1958 'Resto Cal' Volkswagen Beetle on the eve of the National Volksworld Show at Sandown Park, Esher, Surrey, this weekend. Of course, like any other owner, he knows the engine is located behind the back seat

Photograph: Martin Godwin

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international

Israel lifts West Bank state of siege

PATRICK COCKBURN
Jerusalem

Israel said yesterday it was lifting the internal blockade of West Bank towns and villages which it imposed after the last suicide bomb in Tel Aviv. It was the most severe curfew imposed on the 1.2 million Palestinians on the West Bank since the Gulf war and had created widespread anger.

"The town closure will not be renewed except for a few areas for security reasons," said an army statement. At the same

time Israel will continue to prevent Palestinians entering Israel from Gaza and the West Bank. At the peace summit in Egypt this week, Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, had demanded that the state of siege be lifted.

But while it is easing conditions for Palestinians on the West Bank, Israel is contemplating two measures likely to produce a fresh cycle of violence - the deportation of leaders of Hamas, the Islamic political movement, and military retaliation

against guerrillas in Lebanon for recent ambushes of Israeli troops occupying the south of the country.

Shimon Peres, the prime minister, says he approves of the expulsion of Hamas activists though not of their families. Deportation of Hamas leaders, similar to the Israeli action in 1992 when 415 were expelled, is likely to heighten tension on the West Bank and will be difficult to carry out since the political leaders of the movement are mostly in Gaza.

In Lebanon, where five Israeli soldiers were killed and 21

wounded in ten days by Hezbollah, the Lebanese guerrilla movement, a senior military officer said: "Hezbollah has crossed all red lines. We cannot continue restraining ourselves."

Another officer predicted a serious military operation in Lebanon. Commentators say action was delayed while President Clinton was visiting Israel after the Sharm el-Sheikh summit.

Palestinians were also upset by the endorsement of Israeli policy by President Clinton, who appeared to justify the closure on security grounds.

during his visit to Israel. For ten days the sick have had difficulty reaching hospitals and food supplies have been running low. "Primary health services are paralysed and deaths have resulted from people's inability to access health services."

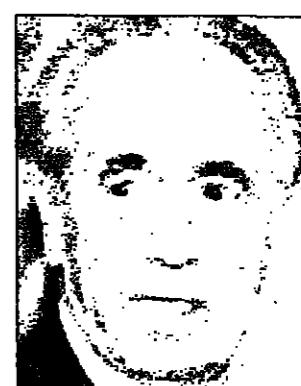
Dr Barghouti said that in St John Hospital in East Jerusalem, only 12 out of 69 nurses have been able to get to work and at another no more than 26 per cent of beds are

occupied because patients are stopped at Israeli checkpoints. The Land and Water Establishment, a Palestinian human rights organisation, say that five people have now died.

In one case Hanan Zair, a pregnant Palestinian woman in labour on her way to hospital in Bethlehem, was detained by an Israeli checkpoint where she gave birth to twins. Her family say that they were delayed an hour, as a result of which both babies died later in hospital. An army investigation contends that one was born dead.

Palestinian leaders argue that the closure has generated such friction it will erode support for the Oslo agreements and lead to fresh attacks. Many measures common during the Palestinian intifada in 1987 to 1992 returned, including the stripping of curfew-breakers and forcing them to walk home naked.

Meanwhile, the absence of more suicide bombs exploding since 4 March, the Sharm el-Sheikh summit and the supportive visit of President Clinton are helping Mr Peres in his election campaign. In the latest poll in the daily *Yediot Aharonot* he leads Binyamin Netanyahu, the leader of the right-wing Likud party, by 50 per cent to 47 per cent.



Shimon Peres: Clampdown has helped election hopes

Lebanon's fear:
'They are coming'ROBERT FISK
Beirut

They came back yesterday, eight Israeli jets flying high over Beirut and the village of Nahine, five miles south of the capital, circling for three hours, taking photographs - or so the Lebanese believed - and prompting UN troops in southern Lebanon to prepare their red alert codes for the next few days. "They are coming," a security official said at midday, without suggesting the time or the place. And Shimon Peres, the Israeli Prime Minister, did nothing to lessen Lebanon's fears.

In just 10 days, Lebanese Hezbollah guerrillas have killed five Israeli occupation soldiers and wounded another 11, two of them seriously, inside southern Lebanon, their latest attack - a roadside bomb against an Israeli convoy - coinciding with the Sharm el-Sheikh "anti-terrorism" conference. "We will draw the appropriate conclusions," Mr Peres said yesterday. "We have decided not to dance to their tune and we will decide how to deal with these provocations." But Hezbollah also knows the time and is well aware that the Israeli will retaliate.

Not only has Hezbollah attacked Israeli troops in the occupation zone but it is now waging of a more bloody war in the south of the country. "The struggle against Israel is going to get bigger, more powerful and more effective," said Sayed Nasrallah, the Hezbollah leader, told journalists in Beirut. Clinton's threats to bring Hezbollah's usual retaliation: showers of Katyusha rockets on to northern Israel, an event which would not exactly encourage Israelis living there to vote for Mr Peres' Labour Party. A raid from the sea by Israeli troops on guerrilla bases near Nahine - held not by the Hezbollah but by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine General Command - cannot be ruled out. But the last time the Israelis staged such an assault, in 1987, it turned into a fiasco when the Palestinians fought back, killing an Israeli colonel and wounding several of his comrades.

Syria's 20,000 troops in Lebanon will almost certainly not be attacked; however stalled the Israeli-Syrian peace negotiations in the US may be, Mr Peres will not want to offend President Assad or provoke a total break in the talks.

What the Lebanese are asking is how far the US will go in encouraging Israel to strike back in Lebanon for suicide bombings staged by men from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It would be naive to think that US "anti-terrorist" aid for Israel stops at technical assistance. Have the Americans given a green light to Mr Peres to hit at the organisation which once held western hostages in Lebanon? And if so - given the fact that only a full-scale invasion would put them on the defensive - to what end?

Egypt's chief sheikh dies aged 79

Cairo (Reuters) - The Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar, head of Egypt's highest religious authority and an influential voice of conservative Islam, died yesterday aged 79.

Sheikh Gadd el-Haqq Ali Gadd el-Haqq supported female circumcision and recently urged tough punishment for

Muslims breaking fasting laws in the holy month of Ramadan. Thousands of mourners joined government ministers, Islamic and Coptic Christian leaders for his funeral at the 1,000-year-old Al-Azhar mosque. Hundreds of police, some in full riot gear, watched as chanting crowds followed the coffin.



Taking a bow: Worshippers outside a mosque in Gaza City yesterday, watched by a Palestinian policeman

Photograph: Adel Hana



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'Silk Curtain' cuts Europe in two once more

TONY BARBER
Europe Editor

A new "Silk Curtain", replacing the Iron Curtain of old, is falling across eastern Europe, separating countries that are entrenching themselves in the Western world from countries that are slipping back into Russia's embrace.

While Western governments talk publicly of building a Europe *undivided by political or ideological fault lines* - "a Europe whole and free", in the words of George Bush, the reality is that some countries are binding themselves closely to the West, and others are experiencing a gravitational pull towards Russia.

Those which stand clearly on the Western side of the line include the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia. Those on the Russian side include Belarus and the three Transcaucasian states of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. In a grey zone, with their future status unclear, are Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine and the three Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Officially, European governments consider the term "spheres of influence" a dirty phrase these days. Privately, however, diplomats acknowledge that the West and Russia are involved in a silent struggle over where the new dividing line in eastern Europe will be drawn.

Russia's parliament, where the resurgent Communist Party is the dominant faction, made clear its views yesterday by approving a resolution that denounced the abolition of the Soviet Union. By 250 votes to 98, the State Duma (lower house) urged President Boris Yeltsin to reintegrate Russia with former Soviet republics that have been independent since 1991.

That process is already in motion in the case of Belarus, whose pro-Moscow president, Alexander Lukashenko, refers to Russia as "the great motherland". He favours not only an economic and military union with Russia but also the construction of a road "corridor" through Belarus to link the Russian heartland with the Russian-owned enclave of Kaliningrad on the Baltic Sea.

That proposal has caused alarm bells to ring in Poland, since the road would probably pass through Lithuania - implicitly increasing Russian influence over an important Polish neighbour - and possibly through part of Poland. Russia's Foreign Minister, Yevgeny Primakov, told Polish leaders this week that "all the talk about the corridor" was a misunderstanding, but Mr Lukashenko seems

to be entirely serious about it. Russia's principal objective in Eastern Europe is to prevent its former Warsaw Pact allies from becoming full members of Nato, a move that it says would threaten Russian security by bringing a Western military presence up to its doorstep. For its part, the Western alliance hopes to take in some new members, but is playing down the issue for fear of jeopardising Mr Yeltsin's chances of re-election next June.

Moscow has floated two ideas as possible compromises over Nato enlargement. One is to offer the eastern Europeans a joint Western-Russian security guarantee, and the other is to let them acquire political but not military membership of Nato.

Neither suggestion appeals to the Czech Republic and Poland, which are likely to be among the first new Nato members. The Czech Foreign Minister, Josef Zelenec, said bluntly this week that the terms of his country's entry into Nato were a matter for discussion between Prague and the Western alliance, "but definitely not with Russia".

Poland's Foreign Minister, Dariusz Rosati, recalled how a British-French guarantee had failed to save Poland in 1939. Flatly rejecting the idea that Poland should be left as a buffer state between the West and Russia, he said: "Poland is determined to seek Nato membership. History shows guarantees are inadequate."

While the Czechs, Hungarians and Poles are developing ever closer relationships with the West, a question mark still hangs over Slovakia. The US and the European Union have publicly rebuked the government of Vladimir Meciar, the Prime Minister, for failing to observe Western standards of democracy.

Last week, the government approved a draft law ordering the imprisonment of people organising anti-government rallies or spreading "false information" about Slovakia abroad.

There is strong evidence that Russia is seeking to exploit Slovakia's bad relationship with the West to its own advantage. The Russians recently offered Slovakia a deal guaranteeing long-term economic supplies in return for Slovak neutrality.

According to central European officials, Mr Meciar personally turned down the proposal. This suggests that, despite its current difficulties, Slovakia is broadly set on the path of integration with the West.

Less clear is the future of the Baltic states and Ukraine. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, which were annexed by Moscow in 1940 and broke free in 1991, want to join Nato, but Estonia in particular is on extremely bad terms with Russia.



Relatives of Shain Ahmed, killed during anti-government riots in the Adamjee district of Dhaka, grieving yesterday. During the past fortnight, 34 people have been killed in the Bangladeshi capital as security forces have clashed with activists. Photograph: Pavel Rahman / AP

US failure on Bosnian arms exposes split

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY
Defence Correspondent

The US failed yesterday to persuade the leading European powers to help re-arm the mainly Muslim Bosnian armed forces. The move has revealed a split which threatens to divide not only the Nato nations in the peace Implementation Force but also the five-nation "contact group".

Representatives of more than 50 countries met in Ankara to discuss US proposals to re-arm and re-train the Bosnian government forces. But Britain and France were only observers and the Russians refused to attend.

The US wants to build up the forces of the Bosnian government and their Croat allies - before the withdrawal of the Nato-led peace force, I-For, at the end of the year - as a counterweight to the better-armed Bosnian Serb forces. Britain and France always opposed arming one side in the civil war and still oppose arming the Muslim-Croat entity before I-For withdraws, in case the arms are turned on their peacekeeping troops.

If the US drive succeeds, Britain, France and Russia will not only be humiliated diplomatically but will also be excluded from arms sales. US equipment and training played a major part in Croatia's victories last summer and are also used by Turkey and Saudi Arabia, which have played a lead-

ing role in supporting US efforts to re-arm the Bosnian Muslims.

So far, the US has offered \$100m and was trying yesterday to gain further contributions from oil-rich Arab states. Bosnia's senior representative, Muhammed Sacirbey, is seeking \$750m to \$1bn in the first year.

Mr Sacirbey said the Bosnian forces had about 200,000 men under arms and that although the economy would benefit from demobilising some of the troops, it would cost more money in the short term.

The Bosnian army is a mainly infantry force and needs more heavy weapons. Colonel Terry Taylor of the International Institute for Strategic Studies said yesterday that the first priority would be light armoured vehicles of the type widely used by the British and French in Bosnia, and light artillery. Although Britain and France are most unlikely to supply arms now, diplomatic sources said Britain might assist in other areas such as training in mine-clearance.

Experts agree that the most important part of strengthening the Bosnian armed forces will be improving command, control, communications and training, plus support, including trucks and rations.

■ The UN attacked Bosnia's government yesterday for failing to curb shooting and intimidation of Serbs in the Ilidza district of Sarajevo, now returned to Muslim-Croat control.

Letters, page 14



Copy
video

international

Copycat killing fuels video violence debate

MARY DEJEVSKY
Paris

When the British video launch of Oliver Stone's *Natural Born Killers* was cancelled this week after the Dunblane tragedy, the decision had particular resonance in France. A debate about media violence is raging here, centred on that same film and a couple of teenage killers.

Two weeks ago, police discovered a cassette of the film in the bloodstained bedroom of a 17-year-old – referred to only by his first name, Sébastien, for legal reasons – after a particularly bizarre and gruesome murder. The bloodstained body of a 16-year-old boy called Abdel Gharchiche had been found, wrapped in bedclothes, under the patio of Sébastien's family's respectable detached house near Paris. Abdel had been stabbed more than 40 times.

According to the police who

questioned Sébastien and his 18-year-old girlfriend, Véronique Herbert, the scenario for the murder bore an uncanny resemblance to the plot of *Natural Born Killers*.

Together, it is said, they agreed that Véronique would lure Abdel, a one-time schoolfriend, into bed; Sébastien would find them together and see whether he was sufficiently overcome with jealousy to kill.

That, more or less, is what seems to have happened, with a couple of unforeseen hitches: Véronique was accidentally grazed with the knife and had to seek hospital treatment during their subsequent flight. In addition, they had not anticipated the quantities of blood.

In the days that followed the discovery of Abdel's body, the hunt for Véronique and Sébastien was the talk of France. They had taken off in a Renault belonging to Sébastien's father.

For two days there was no trace of them; then police were called to a garage in a small town in the Cantal, one of the wildest regions of central France, where a young couple had filled up with diesel and driven away without paying. The police lost the trail, but finally Véronique and Sébastien were cornered in a town 70km away in the rush-hour crowds.

According to police reports – released, unlike in Britain, at the time charges are laid – they admitted the killing at once.

Véronique, a year older than Sébastien and past the age of majority, was dubbed the mastermind – "Véronique diabolique". Called confident and unrepentant, when advised to cover her head to thwart photographers on her way into the police station, she declined.

The French media made much of her background. Her parents were separated and

she had lived briefly with her father, an enthusiast for American Indians, who took her on a trip to the "Wild West" of the US. The press printed pictures of her mixing confidently with the wolves her father kept in a pen by his suburban house.

Véronique, it was said, had been obsessed by death since childhood and written macabre poems since the age of 10. *The Silence of the Lambs* was said to have been her favourite film.

It will be months before the case comes to trial. Meanwhile, the French have found a new reason for berating the influence of American films and have opened a debate about violence on television. To many, the crime is not a one-off act of evil, but the logical culmination of what they see as a growing culture of violence that makes it acceptable to bring knives, tear-gas pellets and even guns into the school playground.



Mourners at the funeral of Zahra Rajabi in Paris yesterday. Rajabi, 37, a member of the Iranian National Resistance Council, was assassinated in Istanbul on 20 February

Photograph: Jacques Enron / AP

DO YOU NEED
THE DOCTOR MORE
THAN HE DOES?

THE DOCTOR NEEDS TO GET TO HIM URGENTLY.

BUT COULD YOU BE GETTING IN THE WAY?

WHEN YOU'RE A BIT UNDER THE WEATHER,
THINK BEFORE CALLING YOUR DOCTOR OUT.

IF IT'S AN EMERGENCY, CALL.

WE'LL ALWAYS BE THERE.

BUT IF YOU COULD GET IN TO SEE US,
OR PHONE FOR ADVICE, ALL THE BETTER.

YOU'LL BE GIVING US MORE TIME TO
GET TO SEE SOMEONE LIKE HIM.



IN BRIEF

Yeltsin claims to have Chechen peace plan
Moscow — President Boris Yeltsin, facing an election in June, said he had a peace plan for Chechnya but kept it under wraps and Russian troops continued shelling in the separatist region. Liberal Russian MPs visiting Chechnya said the troops were targeting villages filled with civilians and refugees were pouring out to escape. Mr Yeltsin, who has said solving the crisis is crucial for his chances of re-election on 16 June, has made much of the proposed plan but has put off a final decision on it.

Reuter

Sierra Leone votes for end to war
Freetown — Sierra Leonians voted in a final round of elections to restore civilian rule to their war-weary country, apparently undeterred by a spate of attacks and atrocities designed to discourage polling. Rebels killed 55 people on Tuesday in a vehicle travelling outside the second town of Bo. In Freetown, voting in the presidential run-off between Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, 64, and John Karefa-Smart, 81, started slowly but soon picked up and long queues formed outside polling stations.

Reuter

Russians play fowl
Moscow — The US-Russian "chicken war" heated up, with officials saying a ban on importing American poultry could be in place as soon as today. Vyacheslav Avilov, Russia's chief veterinary inspector, said US standards were inadequate and the ban would go into effect unless a last-minute meeting with the Americans could be arranged. "Americans have met almost all our demands," he said. "The only question now is how to control salmonella."

AP

Sky will be the limit for pilots

Washington — The US announced a project to let pilots set their own course through the skies. Faster travel, lower costs and improved safety are expected from the so-called free-flight plan. "It's the right time to begin. It will be a long-term effort," Federal Aviation Administrator David Hanson said. He estimated that a decade may be needed fully to phase in free flight.

AP

Germans issue warrant for top Iranian

Berlin — German federal prosecutors have issued an arrest warrant for Iranian intelligence minister Ali Fallahian in connection with the 1992 killing of exiled Kurdish leaders in Berlin, a lawyer involved in the case said yesterday. In the judge's view, the minister is strongly suspected of ordering and masterminding the attack. Hans-Joachim Ehrig, who represents families of the victims, said, referring to the investigating magistrate who must approve arrest warrants.

Reuter



Renoir stolen from Belgrade gallery

Belgrade — A thief cut a Renoir from its frame and fled the National Museum here before anyone noticed. *The Woman Bathing* disappeared on Thursday from the museum, said to be known for its tight security.

AP

Orangutans threatened with extinction

Jakarta — Orangutans in Indonesia's east Kalimantan province on Borneo Island are on the brink of extinction because development is destroying their habitat. Soeparno, head of the Samarinda Forestry Research Centre, was quoted as telling the founder and president of the World Wide Fund for Nature, Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands.

Reuter

Semtex firm's environmental bombshell
Prague — The Synthesis firm, known as the maker of Semtex, said it had won an environmental prize sponsored by a foundation linked to the Prince of Wales. It said Britain's ambassador to Prague presented the award from the Czech arm of The Prince of Wales Business Leaders Forum. It honoured a big reduction in air pollutants resulting from installation of cleaning devices at its plant in the central Czech town of Pardubice.

Reuter

Swedes on course for new PM

Stockholm — The Finance Minister, Goran Persson, was made leader of Sweden's ruling Social Democratic Party, replacing retiring Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson. Mr Persson, 46, will be appointed prime minister next week.

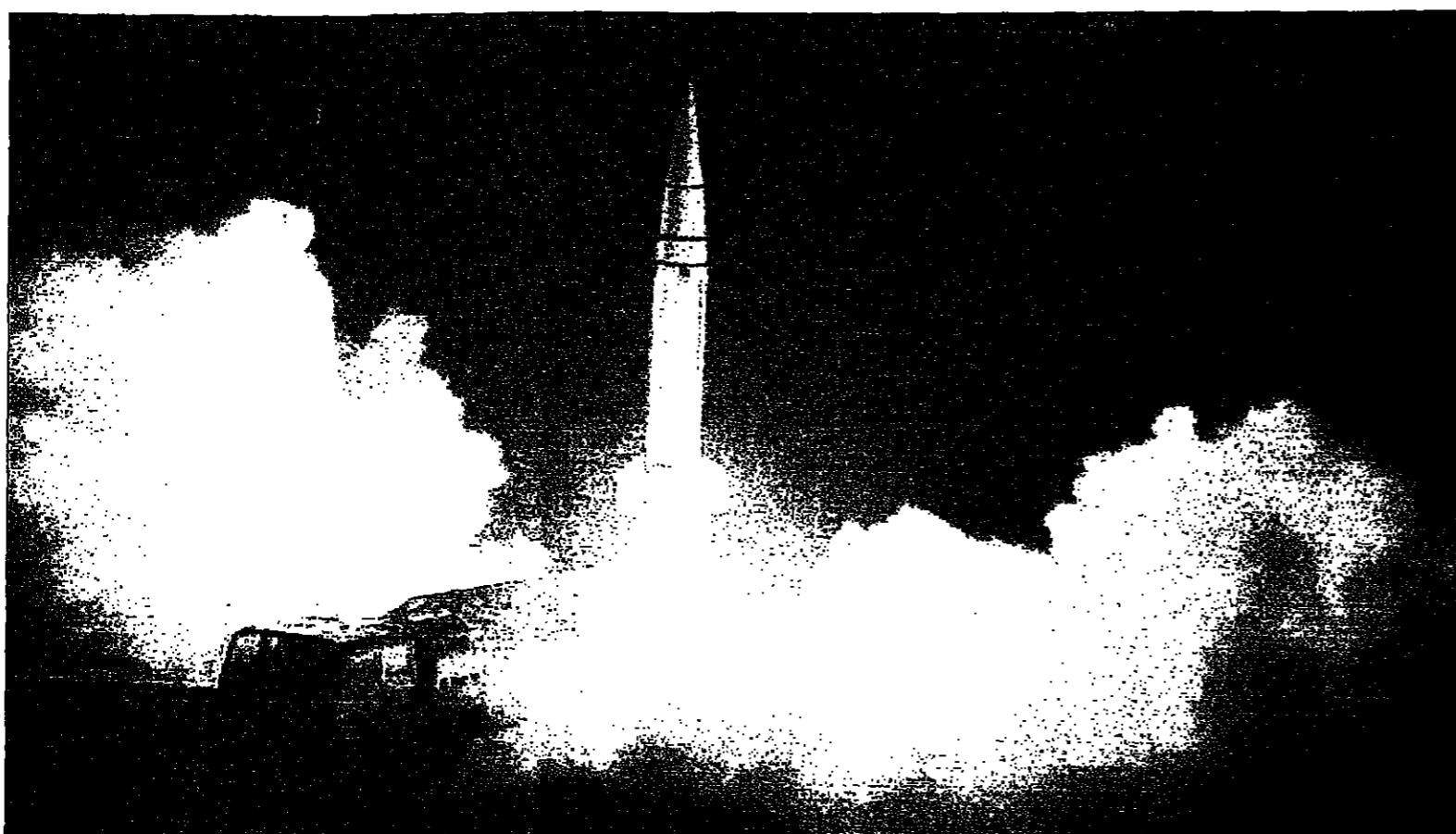
Reuter

Spanish legionnaires riot

Melilla — More than 100 Spanish Legionnaires were confined to their barracks after rampaging through this North African Spanish territory following the killing of a legionnaire the previous day in a bar brawl.

AP

international



Just testing: A ground-to-ground missile being launched by the PLA's Second Artillery Force during exercises near Taiwan

China keeps up the pressure on defiant Taiwan

TERESA POOLE

Taiwan

China has no imminent plan to attack Taiwan but will continue to flex its military muscles against the island state long after next week's presidential elections, analysts forecast. "This year is the year of threats for Taiwan," said Yang Chih-heng, senior military researcher at the Institute for National Policy Research in Taipei.

China is trying to allay fears that it plans to invade Taiwanese territory, while keeping pressure on President Lee Teng-hui, the expected election winner. In Washington, the Pentagon said China had explicitly told the administration

that no invasion of Taiwan was planned.

China's first missile tests ended yesterday but the large-scale live-fire naval and aircraft exercises are scheduled to continue until Wednesday; yesterday Peking announced new war games which will straddle the 23 March elections. The March 18-23 manoeuvres in the Taiwan Strait will be the closest so far to Taiwanese-held territory.

The Taiwanese said suspected new movements of People's Liberation Army (PLA) aircraft had been detected in Fuzhou, at the north end of the Taiwan Strait.

Few on the island expect life to quieten down after the election. Andrew Yang, secretary-general of the Chinese Council of Advanced Policy Studies, said: "I think China will continue to use the mixed political, economic, military and diplomatic measures to force Taiwan to come to the negotiating table after the election."

Peking is determined to curb Mr Lee's push for greater diplomatic recognition and to thwart Taiwan's attempt to obtain a UN seat. If he is re-elected, more foreign visits by Mr Lee are likely to prompt retaliation by Peking, which was enraged by his visit in June to the US.

China's strategy is to affect public opinion by targeting the economy. Intermittent military manoeuvres are likely to persist to keep Taiwan's financial markets and business community on edge. Yang Chih-heng said he expected more missile tests into target zones close to Taiwan later this year. "Perhaps the next ones will be in the East China Sea. Maybe around 20 May, when the new president is inaugurated," he said.

The central-bank governor, Shen Yuan-dong, said up to \$4bn (£2.6bn) had left Taiwan recently as residents converted savings out of the local currency. Taipei spent \$1.5bn in the past two weeks buying shares to prop up the local stock market.

Trade and investment are likely to be the next to suffer. Taiwanese figures show \$24bn is invested in industrial ventures in China's southern provinces along the Taiwan Strait and Taiwanese investors will become increasingly nervous the longer the crisis continues. China will have to bear the fall-off in investment but it can weather a downturn.

Mainland concern about Mr Lee's policies is unlikely to abate. "It seems they are getting very impatient about Taiwan's current political development... the next generation, when they

are up to the required age to vote, that young generation does not want any kind of reunification," said Andrew Yang.

Peking wants immediate concessions from Taiwan, including an explicit commitment to reunification. But Andrew Yang said it was out of the question. Mr Lee would make political concessions after the election, partly because of pressure by the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party. His ruling Kuomintang National Party has a majority of just one in the Legislative Yuan.

The best Peking can hope for is lower-level compromises by Mr Lee, who is anxious to ease tension. He may agree to discuss direct air, shipping and postal links, which the mainland has been calling for. He will probably also propose opening discussions on the peaceful settlement of cross-strait relations.



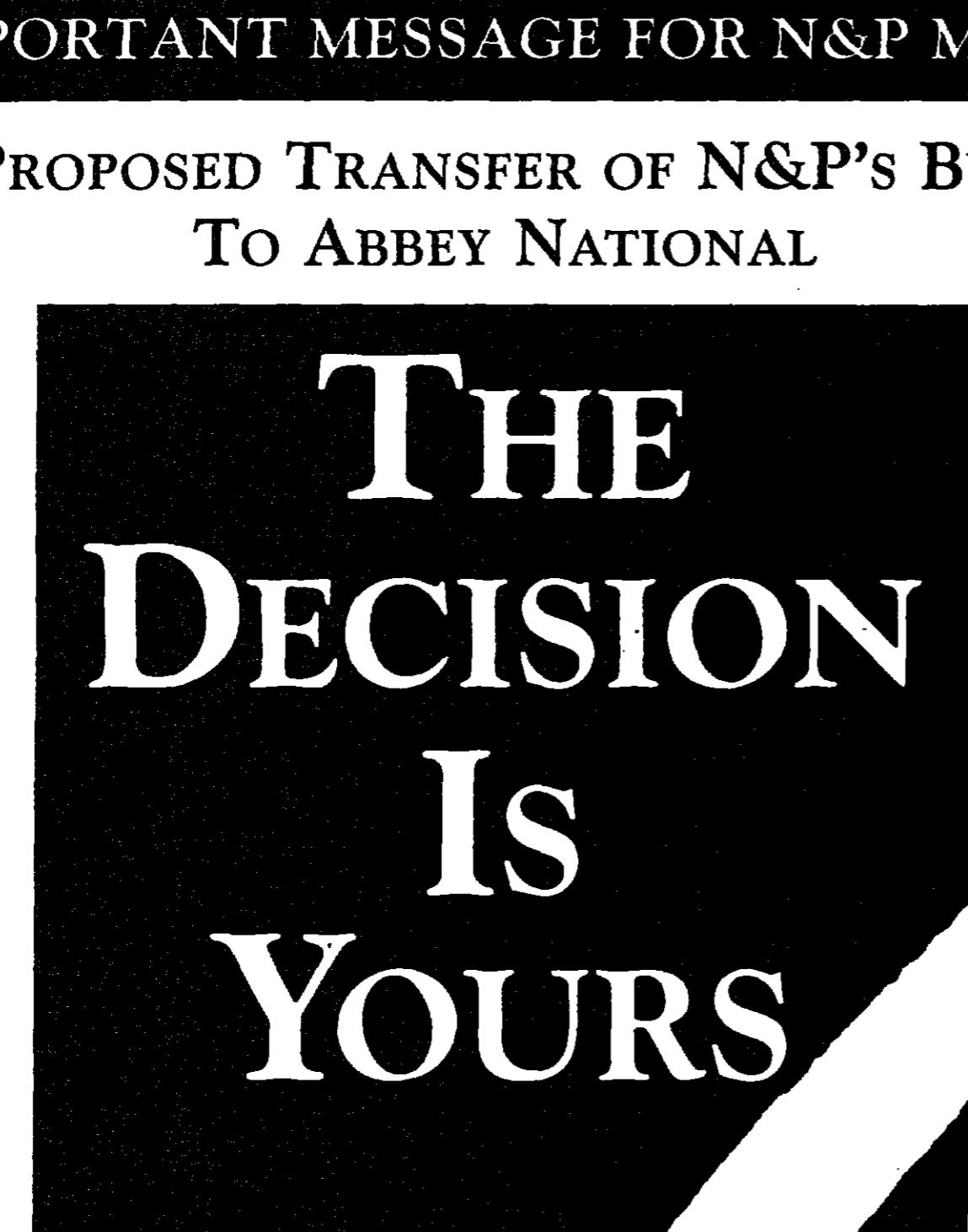
Lee: Unlikely to make any political concessions

tions. But this is unlikely to placate Peking. "What China is trying to pursue is the political issue," said Andrew Yang.

For the PLA, the East China Sea will become its priority area for regional security. Peking's aggressive stance will include more investment in defence. It is already set to buy more Su-27 aircraft from Russia and is keen to purchase more submarines, which would have a role in mounting any blockade of Taiwan.

Taiwan also wants to increase its submarine fleet from four to 12; F-16 and Mirage aircraft on order will start arriving later this year.

Rhetoric will remain shrill as the two sides stake out positions. "Taiwan will stress political reform and the mainland will stress nationalism," said Yang Chih-heng. But Peking realises it has a window of opportunity in terms of the effectiveness of its bombast before Taiwan's new arms are delivered. "Peking knows now is the time," said Yang Chih-heng.



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UN targets aid to build a new Africa

DAVID ORR
Nairobi

The United Nations biggest ever campaign for the development of Africa - recognised as "the world's foremost development challenge" - was unveiled amid much fanfare yesterday.

The so-called Special Initiative for Africa was launched by Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the UN Secretary-General, in tandem with the World Bank and UN agencies in Nairobi, Geneva, New York, Paris and Rome.

"Now is the time for the United Nations and international community as a whole to stand together with Africa," he said. "Now is the time for us to forge a new partnership."

"We want today to tell Africa solemnly it isn't alone, it is more than ever in the sight of the world ... I am not appealing to the gen-

erosity of the international community, I'm appealing to its conscience," he said.

The programme, whose estimated cost over a 10-year period is \$25bn, aims to expand basic education and health care, to promote peace and better governance, and to improve water and food security.

The huge cost of the initiative will have to come from a redirection of existing UN resources and from a readjustment of African governments' often much-criticised spending priorities.

It will also require fresh financing from Western governments equivalent to about 20 per cent of current development aid flows to Africa. The sources of funding, given the UN's current financial difficulties and the pressure on aid budgets, are vague.

Despite the upbeat tone of the initiative, which suggests

that Africa's prospects for economic recovery are better than ever, the continent remains the only one where, on UN measures, poverty is on the rise.

And though its leaders and visiting aid experts never tire of expounding on its abundant promise and potential, Africa has been beset over the past three decades by repeated economic and social crises.

The results of structural adjustment - the ideology of economic management devised by the World Bank and often criticised by African leaders - have been modest and progress has fallen well short of expectations.

The poor, and particularly women and children, have been the first to suffer as governments have sought - often under extreme duress from the donor community - to live within their means.

Africa has been largely left

behind as countries in Asia and elsewhere have made better use of their resources and competed more effectively on the world market.

Africa's countries include 22 of the 25 nations identified by the United Nations as having the lowest human development levels in the world, while 33 of the world's 47 least developed countries are African.

Access to such basic services as health care and primary education in Africa remains lower than anywhere else, while population growth and infant mortality levels are higher. It is estimated that by the turn of the century one-third of the world's poor will be living in the African continent.

So at a time when many countries continue to be torn apart by conflict - among them Burundi, Sudan, Somalia - the timing of this new UN endeavour is crucial.



Military manoeuvres: Women training yesterday with the Sudanese Popular Defense Force at Khawi, outside Khartoum. The militia - optional for women - provides troops to fight against the southern rebels. Photograph: AP

Ethiopians edge back from brink of famine

For the first time the country is almost self-sufficient in food, writes David Orr

Addis Ababa - To many in the West, Ethiopia has become synonymous with the terrible famine of 1984-85, when nearly 1 million people died.

Though its sheer scale has earned it a special place in the annals of human suffering, the Eighties famine is by no means unique in Ethiopia's recent history. In 1973 a drought in the same north-eastern region of the country resulted in the deaths of some 300,000 people.

Again, in 1994, food shortages in the Tigray and Wollo areas killed between 5,000 and 10,000 people.

There are those who believe starvation to be the intermittent but inevitable fate of this part of Africa. Simon Mechale, the man whose unenviable job it is to prevent another famine, is not one of them. But neither is he overly complacent about the future.

"This is the best year in our country for a long time," Ethiopia's Commissioner for Disaster Prevention and Preparedness, said. "We've had better rain, there's peace and the government has been helping farmers with fertiliser and improved seeds. But this

lulation of 57 million people. Besides, the areas of maximum rainfall do not coincide with the areas of maximum population.

Almost half the inhabitants are judged by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) to be under threat from famine.

"Simply put, people are living where they shouldn't," Allen Jones, WFP director in Ethiopia, said. "It rains more or less all year round in the west but most of the population is concentrated in the centre, the north and north-east."

Yet relocation is not the solution it might appear. Around the time of the 1984-85 famine, the regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam, which fell in 1991, tried to shift whole communities from the beleaguered north and north-east.

It was a disaster: people and cattle used to the highlands fell victim to unfamiliar diseases in the lowlands. And there were outbreaks of ethnic unrest as hitherto unacquainted tribes were forced to compete for scarce resources.

The severity of the 1984-85 famine was exacerbated by the rigidly Marxist Mengistu regime and by its cynical use of food as a weapon of war. Food aid was withheld in an attempt to flush rebels out of their highland strongholds.

Five years of relative peace coupled with the reintroduction of a market economy by the government of Meles Zenawi have helped boost agricultural production. These factors combined with the good rains of last year, have conspired to make the country, for the first time in recent memory, almost self-sufficient in food.

In the past decade or so Ethiopia needed about 600,000 tonnes of food aid a year. That amounts to an average spending of £80m a year on food aid. But the bulk of the 125,000 tonnes needed this year will be purchased in Ethiopia.

Yet Ethiopia remains one of the poorest countries: per capita income is estimated at less than £75 per annum.

"Ethiopia is extremely vulnerable," Mr Jones said. "In times of drought, the people don't have enough cattle to sell to tide them over. A man can't just go out and pawn his wife's jewellery, because she hasn't got any. People don't have much access to jobs; the vast majority just scratch a living from the land."

Nevertheless, there are signs that the situation is improving. The 1994 drought endangered just as many people as were affected a decade earlier, yet the death-toll was much lower.

The difference was that in 1994 the relief mechanisms were in place. The government, the UN and non-governmental organisations were able to act quickly, implementing a pre-agreed plan and drawing on massive food reserves at strategic locations.

This year for the first time the government is asking for aid to train people to look after the food needs of their own regions and to detect the early warning signs of food shortages.



Mengistu: Ruthlessly used food as a weapon of war

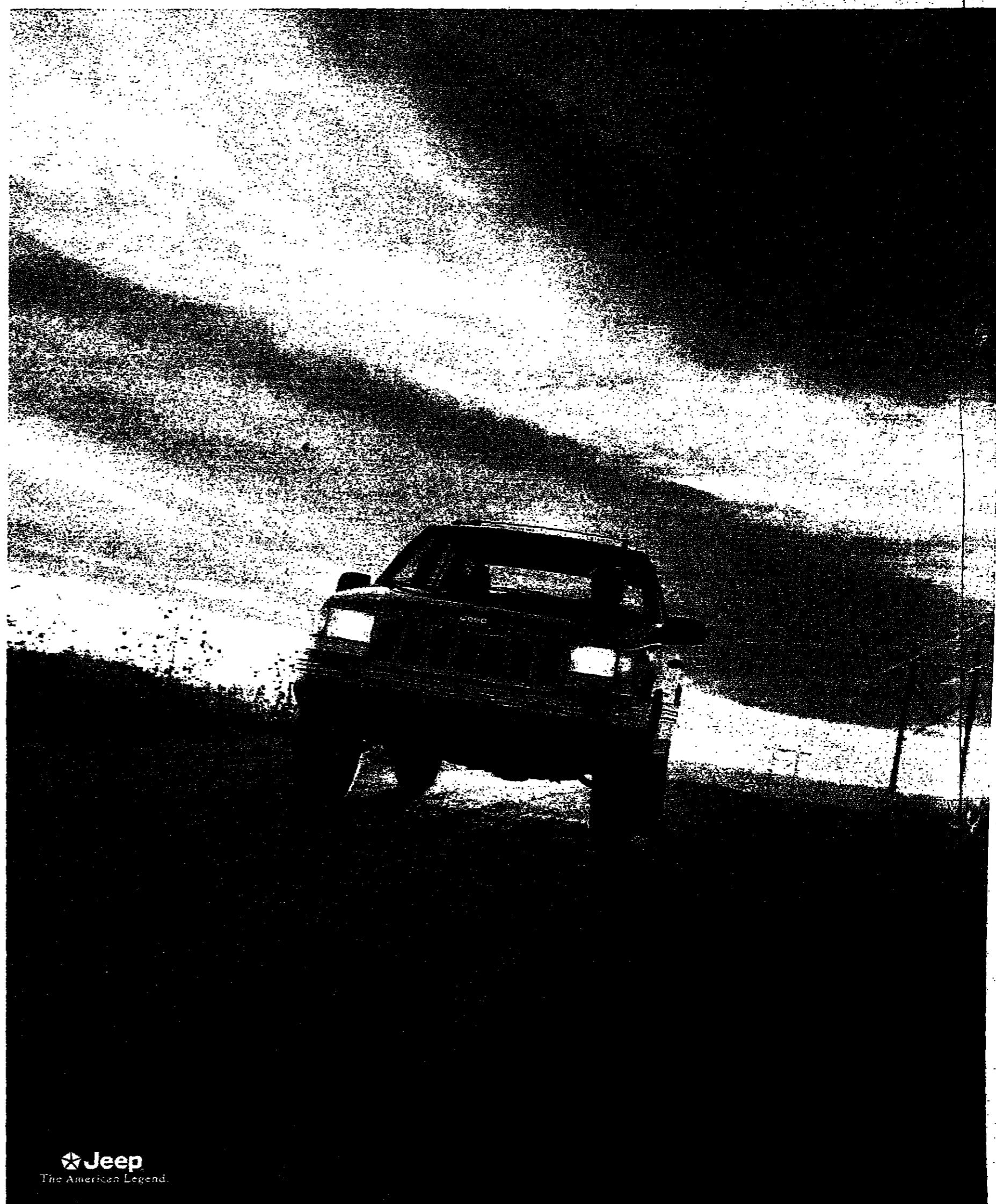
doesn't mean there's no problem. We still need food aid for 2.3 million people this year."

Ethiopia is one of the most famine-prone countries on Earth. There is a food shortage here every year, a crisis about once a decade. With proper management it is usually possible - as it should be this year - to prevent people dying from starvation. But the threat of disaster is constant and it is likely that the country's food aid needs will continue to grow rather than diminish.

"To a certain extent we have control over the human elements: what sort of government we have, whether there's war or peace, whether we're implementing the correct agricultural policies," Mr Mechale, an economist with a degree from Bradford University, said. "But if the rain doesn't come, there's nothing we can do."

Among the government's disaster-prevention schemes is a plan to lessen the country's dependence on rainfall by utilising rivers, which an official report has said could be harnessed to develop nearly 6 million acres through irrigation.

The underlying problem is that population growth is outstripping agricultural production and the land is simply not fertile enough to support a popu-



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Weekend

The Independent



Defense force at Khawil, on
the southern rebels' Progress

Peter Brook

The one that got away

Interview, page 3



Photograph: Nigel Parry, Katz

THIS WEEKEND WHY NOT...

DISCOVER

The Insect World

Get behind the cameras in a workshop with *Alien Empire* producer Steve Nichols and find out how to film exploding beetles and other mysteries of the natural world. It's National Science Week, an ideal opportunity to give children a voyage of discovery. ■ Natural History Museum, London SW7 (0171-530 9123). Adults £5.50, Children £2.80.

MAKE

Your Mother Happy

Sort out a bouquet of flowers, make breakfast in bed and cancel the morning in the kitchen by taking Sunday lunch aboard a steam train. Book now for a traditional five-course dinner on the Mothers' Day special at Butterley Station. ■ Midland Railway Centre, Butterley Station, Ripley, Derby. (01773 747674) Adults £11.95, children £7.95.

SEPARATE

Fact from Fiction

A highlight of the London Interactive Book Festival is this afternoon's discussion between the country's leading biographers and writers of historical fiction. Luminaries in attendance include Victoria Glendinning (who bats for both teams), Stella Tillyard, Allan Massie and Melvyn Bragg. ■ National Hall, Olympia, London W14 (01225 448831) 2-5pm, £10.99.

BUY

Funny Face

Audrey Hepburn was never lovelier than in Stanley Donen's ravishing homage to the fashion photographer of genius, Richard Avedon, played here by Fred Astaire. Style expert Kay Thompson barks at you to banish the beige and "Think Pink", while Hepburn at her most gamine coos her way through "How Long Has This Been Goin' On?". ■ BAC, London SW11 (0171-223 2223) Sunday, 7pm-midnight.

LAUGH

On St Patrick's Day

Scamper off to Battersea Arts Centre, order a pint or three of Guinness, and round off the day with a night of Irish comedy compered by comedy musician John Moloney. Dylan Moran stormed the event last year; he's back with Barry Murphy, Kevin Gildea and Noel Faulkner. Big laughs, late bar and disco. ■ BAC, London SW11 (0171-223 2223) Sunday, 7pm-midnight.



Toothache and dental pain?

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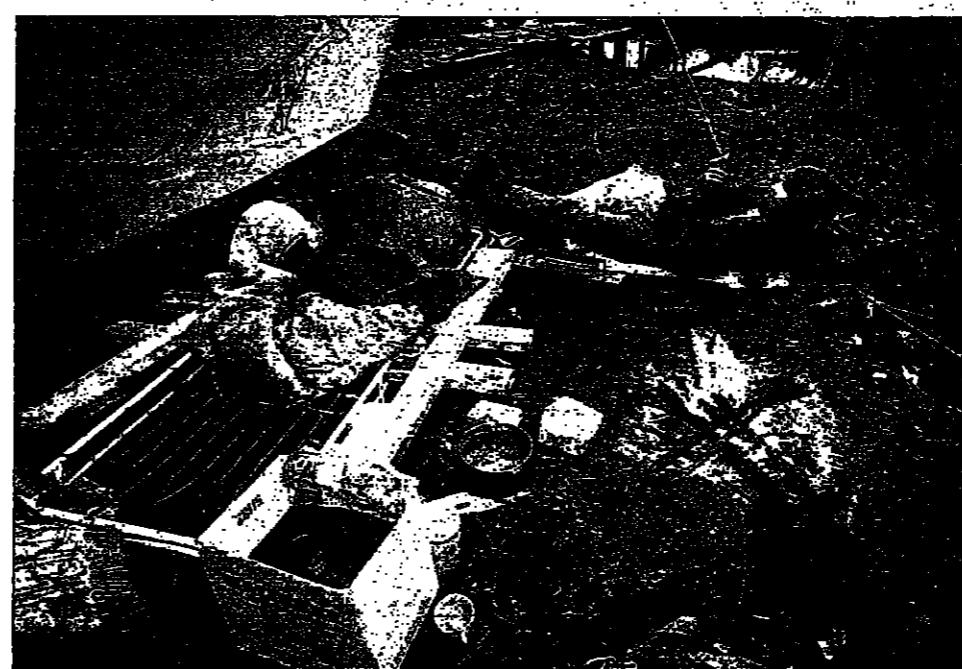
Walk on the wild side: a protestor crosses between sky-high tree houses at the Granny Ash camp by means of a nylon walkway. In the foreground, part of the ring formed by the security force when they clear the tree camps.

IF YOU GO DOWN TO THE WOODS TODAY



Chain-gang: other protestors, some of them local residents, try to stop cherry-pickers and bulldozers moving in by forming a line of their own just outside the security ring

It's more than two months since contractors first started to clear the woodland areas that stand in the path of the proposed Newbury Bypass. Initially outwitted by protestors, they are now rapidly gaining ground. John Voos watched the daily clash of wills in the camps at Granny Ash and Kennet



Dawn radio: at Kennet camp, Jim, a local resident, cradles a CB radio and listens in to find out which camp is being targeted next for eviction. As soon as protestors get hold of this information, they regroup



Left: a notepad and a camera are just two of the tools used by legal observers to record unnecessary uses of force (others include camcorders and cassette-recorders). A number of protestors are currently bringing assault charges against individual security guards

Right: contractor-bashing brightens up protestors' days, while, below, small fires keep spirits alive during the long night-watch. Ever since contractors decided to surprise protestors by turning up during the small hours, nothing has been left to chance. But despite the sophistication of the protestors' organisation, Kennet was cleared yesterday after two and a half days' battle. Six of the 28 camps (and the trees that housed them) have now fallen and a seventh, at Castlewood, is currently being cleared



The



The king over the water

Board the Eurostar to Paris and just a stone's throw from the Gare du Nord you'll find England's greatest stage director at work on England's greatest play. Paul Taylor asks 'qui est là?' at the court of the Player King

One of the less discussed consequences of the Channel Tunnel and the Eurostar is that English theatre-goers are now only three hours away from the work of the man who has been called – since his symbolic move, in 1970, from the restrictions of English institutional theatre to Paris and the demanding freedoms of his Centre International de Recherche Théâtrale – the greatest director this country hasn't got.

The journey is particularly easy if you happen to be the artistic director of our own National Theatre. Waterloo is just a step away from the South Bank and likewise, at the other end, it takes no time to walk from the Gare du Nord to the Bouffes du Nord, the wonderful old horseshoe-shaped vaudeville house that – left more or less as he found it in all its peeling, dilapidated, glowing-red glory – is home to Peter Brook's productions.

Richard Eyre had made such a trip only the previous week. Brook tells me when we meet for a drink at the Café de Flores. He also reveals that it was a conversation with Eyre that threw up the germ of his present production, *Qui est là?*, a fascinating mosaic-like mix of scenes from *Hamlet* and reflections on the nature of theatre, acting and direction, culled from the writings of Artaud, Brecht, Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, Gordon Craig and the Nob master, Zemán.

Theatre is a quintessentially collaborative art. It struck Brook as therefore something of a paradox that directors tend to operate in isolation from each other. So, about six years ago, he and Eyre "invited a group of directors of different ages to come together to see if we could have a free and intimate exchange about our problems and, as we left, he and I began to talk around this theme and I said that I had, at the back of my mind, the sense that it could be dramatised and Richard was very encouraging".

Brook's initial impulse was to do a play that concentrated on Vsevolod Meyerhold, the revolutionary Russian director and founding member of the Moscow Art Theatre. "He is the first great hero of theatre: a hero and a martyr," declares Brook. "He is the theatre's Socrates," this last a reference to the fact that – after a career of brilliant experiment stretching from the days of Symbolist aestheticism to those of prescriptive socialist realism – Meyerhold was driven out by the talentless apparatchiks of the Stalin era and died,

a "non-person", either at the hands of an executioner or in a labour camp.

Brook rapidly saw, however, that when you contemplate the beginning of this century – when the modern idea of the director and the art of *mise en scène* were suddenly invented, in reaction to the bankrupt pictorialism and practices of the previous era – what is interesting is the emergence not of a single figure but of "a handful of super-talented visionaries possessed of that energy that comes from entering a new continent".

These men had, to put it mildly, their doctrinal disagreements and Brook is both amusing and sympathetic about "the natural, human tendency to believe in and defend one's own territory excessively. So Stanislavsky [with his emphasis on the actor's inner motivation and emotional memory] for a long time had to believe that his dear pupil Meyerhold was on the wrong track [with his view of acting as Pavlovian reflex]. And Meyerhold had to believe that his dear, much-respected father-figure, Stanislavsky, was also off the mark."

Matters veered into farce when Stanislavsky invited Gordon Craig, son of Ellen Terry and cousin of John Gielgud, to the Moscow Art Theatre to direct *Hamlet*. But then, that would have been hard to avoid, given that the one was a champion of the interior actor, the other of the actor as *Übermarionette* (super-puppet), one element in the total scenic design.

The crunch came, Brook recounts, at the final dress rehearsal. To create a sense of space as a fluid reflection of *Hamlet*'s subjective states, Craig had devised a system of mobile screens that could register shifts of locale and of consciousness and be brought into abstract, cubist patterns. Craig's idea was that these should be moved in full view by costumed stagehands, whereas Stanislavsky's naturalist instinct was to bring the curtain down at the end of every scene. At the final dress, though, the screen somehow came loose and toppled over like a pack of cards, the accident settling the argument in Stanislavsky's favour.

In *Qui est là?*, Brook has avoided what he calls the "television approach" of battenning on dispute. The aim, rather, is to show that "these great visions of theatre are linked and complementary" and that, as he writes in a programme note, the theories aren't absolute truths established for all

time, but ideas to be used at strategic moments. Hence, these voices from the past are transmitted to us by the performers of the *Hamlet* scenes and they are left unidentified except as a list in the programme and to the extent that it's possible to guess that, for the most part, each actor has been assigned the words of one particular visionary. Artaud's reflections, for example, acquire a haunting authority when delivered by a young woman who is partly still in character as Ophelia and partly herself.

An absolute purity of focus has long been one of Brook's cardinal strengths as a director and this is matched by the extraordinary quality of attention he offers you as an interviewee. A small compact figure, now in his 71st year, he is a magnetic combination of intellectual precision and physical daintiness, his fingers tracing in the air the contours of some fleetly articulated thought. After we'd watched him spellbinding the audience at a recent Empty Space Award ceremony, a fellow judge remarked to me that you felt like forsaking wife, children, worldly goods, the lot, and following him. It does him credit that he has not abused that power. As Irving Wardle has written, "The usual penalty for joining the entourage of a great director is that you turn into a courtier and your brain is taken away. But there are no tame house-scribes to be found among Brook's circle."

Like *The Man Who...*, his Oliver Sacks-derived study of the human significance of neurological disorder, *Qui est là?* is at once pell-mell, playful, serious without solemnity, and rinsed clean of all redundancy.

The setting is a simple square of cream matting; the props are minimal: percussively punctuated by a lone instrumentalist, the production is light on its stocking-feet. *Hamlet*, a play with a thespian troupe, an inset drama, and a profound preoccupation with what it means to "act" (the verb covering both real and simulated action), is well-equipped to function as the backbone of this "recherche théâtrale". Now in the thick of the drama, now outside it voicing or demonstrating an *aperçu* from the writings of the chosen directors, the cast of six make seamless transitions.

It's a key moment in *Hamlet* when the First Player performs the speech about Priam's slaughter and Hecuba's grief because it brings home to Hamlet a shaming irony. The professional actor is able to

work himself up to real tears in the service of a mere piece of fiction, whereas Hamlet, who has a real cause for passionate commitment, remains inactive. The way *Qui est là?* treats the episode is typical of the whole enterprise. Firstly, by the time we get to this point, we have already heard two divergent comments on producing stage tears. There's the "biomechanical" approach of Meyerhold, who illustrates his theory with the formula "I see a bear, I'm afraid, I tremble. No, that's not it. I see a bear, I tremble. I'm afraid. We are machines." And there's the "emotional memory" method of Stanislavsky, who confesses that a street accident he recently witnessed involving the death of an old man would be of less use to him in summoning up stage tears than the recollection, from much further back, of seeing a little monkey dead on the pavement.

It's characteristic, too, that the Player King's speech is performed in a mixture of his native language and ancient Greek by a Japanese actor, Yoshi Oida. This is partly for pragmatic reasons: in the original and in European translations, the speech sounds ridiculously dated and bombastic. But the casting and the invoking here of a non-Western theatre tradition and rhetorical style are deeply in accord with the philosophy of Brook's international centre. The aim there has always been not a melting-pot synthesis but a valuing and harnessing of cultural differences purified of cliché. For Brook, the policy has clear benefits in making Shakespeare convincing for a contemporary audience.

This you don't achieve, he argues, by bringing on machine guns and all the paraphernalia of the modern world. Instead, you create a situation where there seems to be no barrier of belief between the actor and his lines. Take the problem of the Ghost in *Hamlet*. If you have two African actors (Bakary Sangare and Sotigui Kouyaté) playing the hero and his father, the cultural awkwardness of crediting an after-life disappears. There's an extraordinary physical tenderness here between Sangare's Hamlet and Kouyaté's Ghost, who appears as a palpable body rather than a spirit and whose continued existence is accepted as quite natural.

The five directors whose voices resonate in the piece were all, says Brook, "Europeans who, at some point in their lives, received the shock of the Oriental theatre.

The one thing they were not exposed to was what the African can bring... These are the great thinkers who have influenced Brook's practice (Artaud, for example, lay behind the *Theatre of Cruelty* season in the Sixties; the historic white-box-and-trapeze *Midsummer Night's Dream* was described as Meyerholdian). Movingly but quite unpretentiously, the piece feels like the résumé of a century of theatrical endeavour and of Brook's own continually questing art.

Qui est là? offers, it's true, a very truncated *Hamlet*, which climaxes not with the duel and the poisonings but with the hero's "readiness is all" speech. It's typical that Brook – whose radically telescoped and reshaped *Carmen* aimed "to unearth the little jewel lost, thanks to the dictates of the Opéra-Comique, in an old warhorse" – should think of *Hamlet* as existing on two distinct levels of achievement. For him, the spiritual journey is complete by the graveyard scene. The final stretch he dismisses as "the Tarantino version", a reverting to the melodrama values of the commercial potboiler on which the play was based. For French audiences, unfamiliar with the tragedy, he needed to keep a thread of narrative continuity, but when, as he plans, he develops the piece for an English-speaking public, he will be free to use *Hamlet* much more impressionistically.

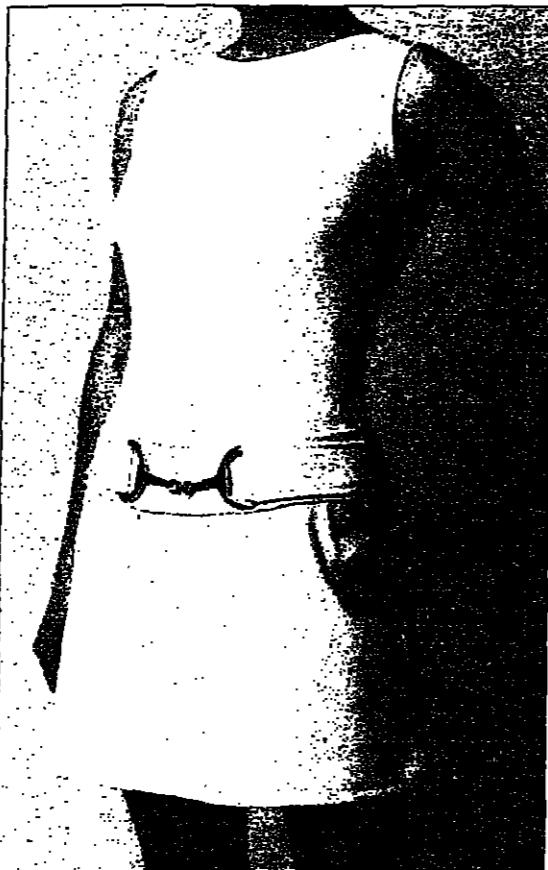
Once completed, the English version will be seen at the National Theatre. Brook offers an interesting angle on the question of the succession there. Of Daldry and Mendes, he says that "to have to run three theatres isn't right for a young person. I think it would stultify them." Trevor Nunn's appointment has been met in the press with a certain amount of priggish comment, the implication being that, by directing Andrew Lloyd Webber, Nunn has touched pitch and could never present a clean enough pair of hands. If anyone has the moral right to take such a lofty position, it is Brook, whose career has been an object lesson in the avoidance of commercial compromise and of the temptations that beset a director in mid-life (megamusicals or monasticism; cynicism or whining). His reaction to the news, however, is one of delight. He points to the richness of Nunn's experience in so many different forms of theatre, his generosity, vigour, imagination and openness. "I think he will be marvellous. Absolutely. I can't think of anyone better."

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ESTATE

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1 Morgan. £59.99. White sleeveless dress in stretch jersey. A neat little dress that holds its shape well, a good one for taking on holiday or for evenings. This dress has mid thigh, is quite clingy, and shorter than we have seen for a while. Also available in black or nude. From branches of Morgan nation wide. 0171 436 5255.

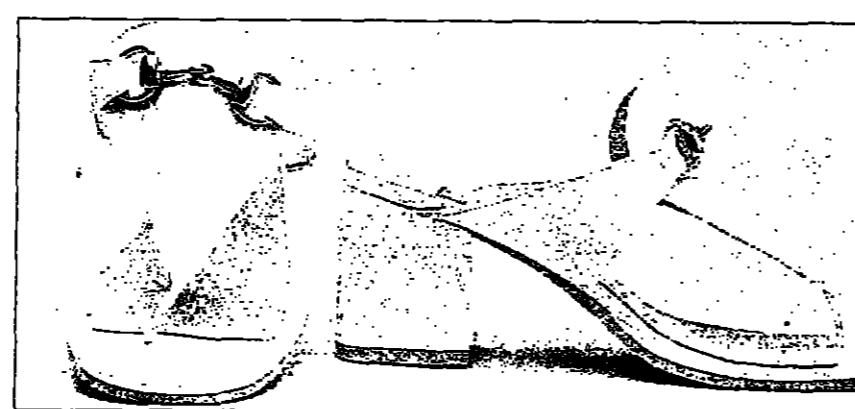


Stylist:
Charlie Harrington

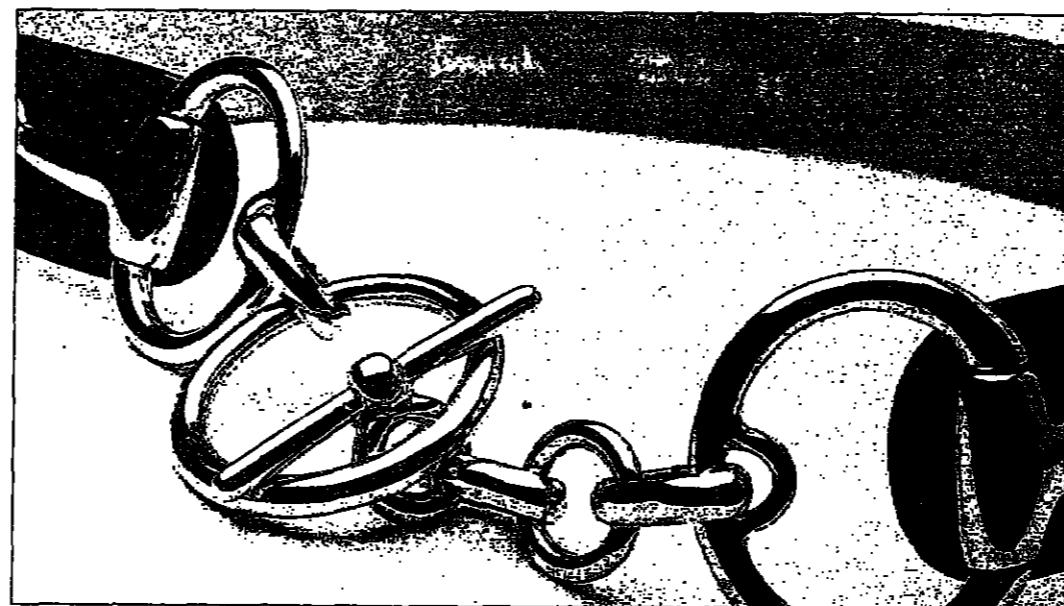
4 Office. £39.99. White patent thong sandals, with Gucci style silver snaffle. High street stores currently have loafers, court shoes, pumps and sandals emblazoned with the Gucci style snaffle, it is one way to look cool. If the snaffle fits, wear it. Available in black or white. From Office stores London and enquiries 0181 838 4447.



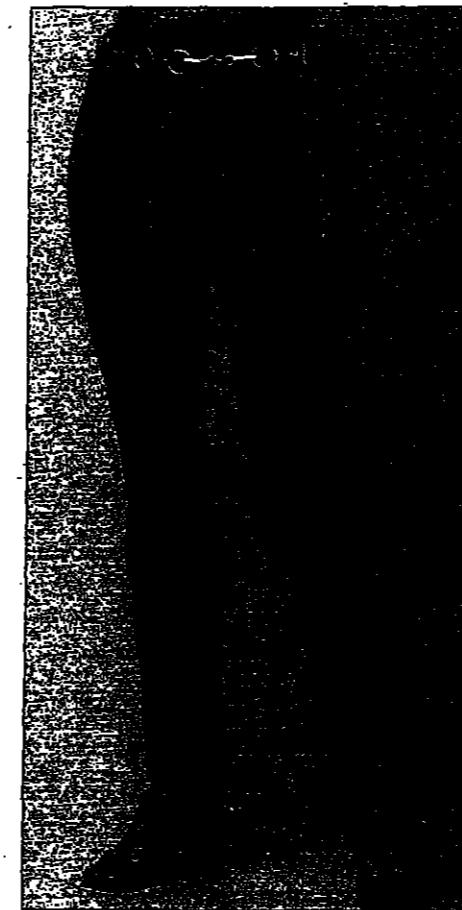
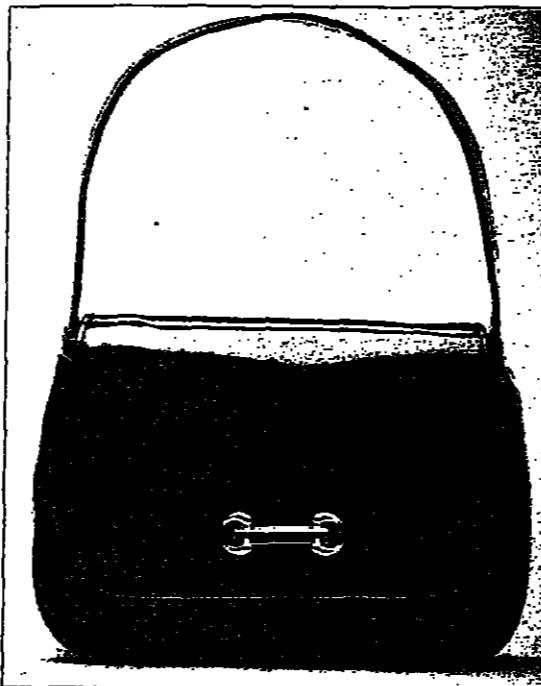
5 Oasis. £39.99. Black and white zebra print shirt. The fabric is fairly sheer, so this shirt is not for the faint hearted. The shape is very narrow and fitted, for that 70s look we are used to seeing on the likes of super models and Madonna. From selected branches of Oasis. 0171 377 5335.



6 Fenwicks. £35. Black leather belt with silver ring fastening. Lies quite low on the hips so it can be teamed with hipsters, or worn over a long line tunic dress for that ultimate Gucci look. Available from Fenwicks, London, and Tunbridge Wells, Kent.



2 Dollargrand Bag. £49.95. Black patent with perspex snaffle. The short shoulder strap seems to be an up and coming trend, it tucks neatly under the arm, and keeps your contents out of reach of pick pockets. A good shape to see you through the summer months. Available from Fenwicks, Harrods and Selfridges. Enquiries 0171 794 3028.



3 Warehouse £39.99. Black side zip hipster trousers, slightly stretch and gently flared. Chain belt from Fenwicks £35. Very comfortable to wear and easily adjustable. Ravel black patent high heeled shoes £34.99. It has been a long time since high heels and trousers have been so fashionable. From branches of Ravel nation wide 0171 631 0224.

The thing about... Mother's Day

Once upon a time there was a mid-Lent festival called Mothering Sunday. On Mothering Sunday, you returned to your mother church for mass, and, if your parents were anywhere near its vicinity, popped in on them as well. It was one of those examples of the church working for the good of *hui polli*: it meant that, once a year at least, the servants got the opportunity to see their families, and, of course, things like graveyards got a good seeing to.

Along with most of the other Christian festivals, Mothering Sunday has long since been subsumed by the great god of Shopping. Mother's Day is another marketing opportunity in those dear days between Santa and the Easter Bunny.

So what are you going to get for the old girl this time around? The time has passed when a nice bunch of daffs from the garden and a big kiss would do. The shopping conspirators are bombarding us with the most tasteful of advertising campaigns. Superdrug reckon you'll be wanting to make a bit of a stink with a bottle of Charlie (yes, they still sell it) slashed to £5.95 from £8.95. Good idea: take her back to the Seventies and remind her how much older she is now. Debenhams, home of the blazer and pussycat bow, is publicising a very special offer: free wrapping paper with every gift. Now that's something to get you salivating.

The card makers, as always, have pulled their fingers out. "You're loved so much because you're you", says the giant-sized rosebud-covered monstrosity at £1.89 in my local newsagents. "Because you're so special" quack some cute ducklings. Now I don't want to get narby, but how come there aren't any that say "because you feed us baked beans every night" or "because I only see you at weekends"?

The Post Office has got in on the act as well. Spotting an extra opportunity to steal directly from the hands of babes, they have plastered bus stops with posters of an infant in a pushchair by a pillar box. "No matter how close you are, mum's card is more special by post" is the slogan. Absolutely. Especially if it turns up on Monday because of no Sunday deliveries.

This year's Ivana Trump award for good taste, though, goes to Interflora. A special Mother's Day arrangement costs "about £27.50", though the more miserly among you can opt for a Harlequin basket at £16.95 or a bouquet at £19.95. But you can order on a special 24-hour freephone (0500 43 43 43), so you're getting top value. And the slogan with which they woo your best familial instincts? "Your mum is expecting". Ahh. Sweet.

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The thing
about...
Mother's Day
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Happiness is a steak and kidney pie

In Germany, the locals are joining homesick natives in British speciality food stores. By Klaus Smolka



Hayley's British Shop: the ketchup is just "a little more tomato-ish"

Such, runs the old joke, is hell: the car-drivers are French, Germans run the Ministry of Fun, Americans are in charge of the arts, Italians organise the whole show. Oh, and the chefs are British.

Any comment by a German on British cuisine is likely to start off with some calumny of this sort. Yet while Germans may pour scorn like gravy, on typically British dishes, the contempt runs both ways.

Many of the 115,000 British expatriates in Germany go out of their way to escape Eisbein und Sauerkraut – and they have around 30 culinary havens to fall back on – shops offering food from Britain.

Hayley's British Shop is one of two such speciality shops in Frankfurt, the city with the largest British community in Germany. The store is run by Hayley Wood, a 26-year-old from North Wales. It has a good position in the Frankfurt West End, an upmarket district rather like the City of London, packed with banks, computer companies, estate agents and consultants. About half of the customers in her shop are British, says Hayley. Most of the others are American or German.

Among the regular customers are Steve Walton and Colin Booth, two construction workers from London, who have been living in Frankfurt for a number of years. Their shopping bags often contain the odd can

of John Smith's Bitter – a weird brew, too flat and insipid by most German standards. "German beer is the best beer in the world," says Steve, "but, well, sometimes the real thing from back home does a lot more to cheer you up."

For Steve and Colin, the steak and kidney pies in Hayley's shop are particular favourites. This is the sort of food you cannot find in most German supermarkets – to German taste buds such pies epitomise the worst of British cuisine.

Steve and Colin also come to Hayley's shop to stock up on products that may be available on the Continent but that "just aren't the same" as the goods imported from Britain. According to the two Britons, the ketchup on Hayley's shelves is "a little more tomato-ish", the mayonnaise "more mustardy", the cereals more crunchy. Even the same product of the same brand tastes different when not imported from Britain, they say.

This refined sense of taste is not entirely imagined. A spokesman of an American company that produces ketchup confirms that although there is one single basic recipe for their ketchup, the ingredients and the processing do indeed vary "to a minor extent" in the individual countries in which the ketchup is produced.

But Hayley concedes that "many customers are probably driven by the force of habit. The

white bread they're after has just got to be Mother's Pride." To meet the demands of her customers she has her food products delivered from a wholesaler in Folkestone every Monday.

Some locals now seem to be warming to the notion of food from the other side of the Channel. British food is becoming more popular, says Roy Edleston, managing director of the Frankfurt-based German office of Food from Britain, which promotes food exports from the UK.

"It is true, for a long time we have had to struggle with a fish-and-chips image on the Continent," says Mr Edleston. "And in Germany and Britain eating and drinking is often considered more of a necessity than something to take pleasure in – unlike in Latin countries."

But the range of British food products in Germany is no longer restricted to classics such as whisky, gin and marmalades. Britain has outstanding natural produce to offer, which is then processed in Germany, says Mr Edleston – crustaceans from the Welsh coast, game and cheeses from the north of England, poultry from East Anglia, or milk from the West Country.

Mr Edleston reels off the facts and figures to support his claim: Germany is the third most important market for the British food industry (after France and Ireland); some £670m worth of food products

were exported to Germany in 1990 – 4 per cent more on the previous year; exports to Germany accounted for 8 per cent of total food exports from Britain.

But while Germans may have developed a liking for British ingredients, are they ever going to take to what they regard as a very peculiar way of processing this food? In the English Shop, Frankfurt's other outlet for British speciality products, German customers are still rare.

"They account for 5 per cent of my clientele," says shop-owner Gunther Bentz, who is himself German. Four out of five customers are British or Irish. Herr Bentz's assortment boasts some 700 British food products, delivered from London and Kent. Herr Bentz has adapted quickly to cater for British demands on special occasions: before Easter, the shelves groan with Easter eggs of a vastness unknown to Germans; and at Christmas the place is packed with plum puddings.

It is particularly during the festive holidays that many expatriates turn to food to remind them of home. Something that is not lost on Hayley Wood: a tin of baked beans or a jar of orange marmalade may not be the prescribed cure for homesickness, but, a visit to Hayley's British Shop is, she says, "the next best thing to being in Britain".

British food in Italy...

Whatever they might say about the countless joys of pasta and ice cream, most Brits living in Italy have a guilty secret lurking at the back of their food cupboards: a packet of ketchup, perhaps, or a pot of Marmite. Often, these are gifts sent over by visiting aunts and uncles, who complain about the lack of salt or cornflakes in the local diet. While a bit of seasoning, though, one can't help but taste of home tucked away in a specialist shop.

In Rome the big macs of Castri, an international delicatessen just north of the Vatican where you can find all the old favourites – Forum & Mason marmalade, Bird's eye butter, Branston pickle, Worcester sauce and much more. A 100g packet of London Earl Grey tea costs £5.00 (or about £2.50), a pot of marmite about the same, while Marmite is a real delicacy at £3.00 for 250g.

When you are of Italian bairns coping tea bags, hot lukewarm water, need for Trattoria, a delightful cafe and tea shop on Via delle Lungotevere in Trastevere. English tea is harder to track down, though, in a small delicatessen on Via delle Croci. Peer the Spanish steps, where you find famous Cheddar for an arm and a leg. Better to head for Il Biscaccia, a delightful restaurant in Piazza degli Spagnoli near Piazza Navona, where the original pasta dishes include one made with Brussels sprouts and blue Stilton.

Andrew Gumbel

...and France

The stronghold of British fare in Paris is Marks & Spencer. English women living here, me among them, make straight for the sausage and bacon counter, relieved that it's easy to buy such a familiar dinner. And it means that next weekend's guests will not be asked to include country pork pies in their luggage; nor that these guests would wish to eat them – a number of anguished visitors have reluctantly swallowed pork pie and coleslaw with us, clearly yearning for a French plat du jour.

The occasional M&S Indian dinner makes most expats feel very nostalgic for all those possibilities of take-away meals. Drinks party snacks, such as crisps and crisps, are popular with the English in France, too. Whipping and double cream cater for truly English recipes. Tea becomes properly catered with Fruited Shortcake Slices, scones and Chocolate Mini Rolls.

More than anything, though, it's the puddings that draw the English resident. Fruit crumble at 17f is excellent value compared to a patissier's exquisite but tiny cake. Most of all, you are tempted by oozing jam poly-poly – although deliveries of these are erratic. On one occasion, I missed the last poly-poly on the shelf, my precious find secreted into someone else's basket. I expressed some surprise that such an elegantly dressed lady should have such a sweet tooth. She denied this stoutly but the hauls won which she fled, leaving her change behind, suggested that she was not entirely speaking the truth.

Isabella Palmer

Good thing

Greenwich Herb and Spice Company Dip-Mix, £2.50

Packs of flavoured dips are all very well but what happens when your pot of Mexican chilli dip outlives your tortillas? Most likely it will languish in the fridge until well past its sell-by date. But an end to all that tragic waste is at hand. The Greenwich Herb and Spice Company have the solution: little bags of herbs ready to add to anything, from the smallest dollop of mayo for a sandwich, to a vat of crème fraîche for a marinade. Choose from Garlic & Herb, Lemon & Dill, Mint & Coriander, Mexican Tomato, Chilli, Curry, Mustard and Horseradish.

Greenwich Herb and Spice Company, Units 8 & 9 Etington Park Business Centre, Aldermaston, Stratford-on-Avon, Warwickshire, CV37 5BT. Tel 01789 450945 for mail order details.

Mad thing

Bath Time Treats by Zarvis, £25.00

Zarvis's bath kits look rather like a beginners guide to voodoo, but will guarantee the bath-time equivalent of a stiff drink for Mother's Day. The enticing Pandora's Box and the highly sexed Vice Box (which comes with the warning "For Baths Only") contain packets of leaves, little bottles of oil, aphro bath sticks, scrolls of cedarwood and chunks of lava stone, all nestled on a bed of alarmingly hairy-like packaging.

Liberty: Tel 0171-734 1234 for mail order or details of your nearest store.

Checkout

Rococo

Rococo Chocolates, 321 King's Road, London SW3 5EP (0171-352 5857)

What is it? A mecca for serious chocolate lovers. The shop was set up by Chantal Cody, founder member of the Chocolate Society.

Who shops here? Those who really know their Grand Cru Manjari from their Grand Cru Guanaja (both blends of rare cocoa beans), and passers-by who are drawn in by spectacular window displays.

What should I buy? Wonderful bunches of chocolate asparagus (£7.50) and chocolate cigars (£3.50). For Easter there are chocolate hens (£6.75) and hares (£5.25), and a huge selection of bird eggs – choose from partridge, hedge sparrow, robin and woodcock. Best sellers are their mint wafers (£6.75 a box). At the cheaper end there are chocolate champagne corks (40p) and sardines (35p). Make sure you get one of their lovely blue and white carrier bags to take your booty home in.

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AUCTIONS

Will the young artists work evolve or will they get fed up with painting and become dentists?

Next week London's spring contemporary art sales. The market for contemporary art is recovering and the rich are getting richer. Only the rich can afford the safest investments that are the very top of the market – blue-chip names such as the Italians Fontana and Poliakoff, whose established reputations are pushing their prices steadily upwards.

The fat-cat collectors' bunch is the same big names that crested the late Eighties boom and will lead the way out of the recession. A Fontana slashed canvas or a blocky Poliakoff abstract composition that would have fetched a whacking £300,000 in the boom years 1988-89 can be snapped up for a third of that today – and in a

rising market. At Christie's last November, Poliakoff's *Composition - Jaune, Bleue et Rouge* (1954) fetched £194,000 – the highest price for the artist for five years. There are two Poliakoff abstract compositions in oils at Christie's on Tuesday (2.30pm) estimated £40,000-£60,000 and £60,000-£80,000. Sotheby's Thursday (10.30am), has two more affordable Poliakoff abstracts: a 1945 water-colour pastel (25in by 19in) est £2,000-£3,000, and a late gouache of the same size est £8,000-£10,000. Fontana's auction prices, hitherto dependent upon fluctuating Italian buying power, have been picking up since last year's exhibition *Italian Metamorphosis* at the Guggenheim in New York. It caught the attention of rich

American collectors. They have brought their own inimitable aesthetic to bear upon Fontana's monochrome slashed canvases: pillar box red sells best, followed by blue, white and green – with gold in a top category all its own. Very symbolic, Wealth, see? Preferences for the other colours have probably been prompted by interior decorators.

You need to be quite well heeled to afford even the cheaper, less safe contemporary artists – the slapdash hot-shots of the Eighties: German and Italian neo-Expressionists mostly still in their thirties. It costs £6,000-£12,000 to invest in a young German – Fetting, Middendorf, Penck – or £10,000-£20,000 for a young Italian such as Paladino, Chia, Clemente. Are their reputations worth a flutter? Will their work evolve, or will they get fed up with painting and become dentists? You just cannot trust the younger generation, these days.

The modern Brit market shows the same trend: big safe – even dull – names are leading the recovery. Last November's main sale of the year, at Christie's, saw ultra-modern Munnings' *Shrimp and the White Poppies*, modestly estimated £40,000-£60,000, sell for £205,000. Another Munnings, of the *de Beauvoir* hounds, estimated £30,000-£50,000, made £102,700. Four others sold well above estimate. This Thursday (11am), Christie's has an unusual Munnings (no horses) of haymaking on the

Stour, estimated £30,000.

The same sale has some 40

paintings and drawings by Augustus John and his sister Gwen, from the private collection of Philadelphia socialites Edgar and Helen Hope Montgomery Scott, upon whom the film "High Society" was based. These fresh-to-market works will either revive the patchy John market or bury it. Plenty of Lowries in this first sale since the announcement of £75m of lottery funds for a Lowry gallery in Salford. Those clogs are becoming very blue chip. Sotheby's has a sale of Impressionists and moderns, Wednesday (10.30am).

John Windsor

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The ridiculous thing about ducks

The British are obsessed by them, the Americans pay up to £250,000 for them. Clive Fewins on the rise and rise of the decoy duck

Ducks poke their multi-coloured heads out of unexpected corners in every room of Sophie Ridges' stone cottage on the edge of the Mendip Hills in Somerset. The ducks are of the carved, wooden variety: "investment decorative decoys" as Mrs Ridges calls them.

They are made in small numbers by carvers in this country and on the other side of the Atlantic. Mrs Ridges, 52, says the gallery at her home in the village of Farrington Gurney (where she also runs wood carving courses) is the only one in the UK devoted specifically to wooden ducks.

The record price for a decorative carved wooden duck decoy at auction in the USA is \$319,000 (about £250,000) but none of the specimens at Mrs Ridges' gallery costs as much as that. She does, though, have a number on sale at more than £1,000, and a handful that she would not part with for any sum.

The most valuable are American and date from the late 1800s or the early years of this century. They are hollow in the centre, with a keel attached to the base to make them float and are regarded as "authentic" decoys.

These working models had to be durable, realistic and cheap to carve. They were not, therefore, things of great artistic merit. Frequently they were roughly shaped with an axe from a single block of wood. These crude early American decoy ducks can fetch four figures — although there is far less work in them than in the more sophisticated modern carved wooden ducks.

The wholesale slaughter of wildfowl in the USA eventually caused trouble. A number of species of duck became scarce and the Labrador duck became extinct. Eventually, in 1918, Congress passed the Migratory Bird Act and this effectively put an end to market hunting. Many of the hunters turned to other ways of making a living and this gave rise to decoy carving as an art form.

In this country, decoy carving has grown in popularity over the last 15 years. Mrs Ridges finds an increasing number of redundant and early retired people coming on the courses that she runs about six times a year, both at her home and at centres belonging to The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust.

"If you wish to take up woodcarving then ducks are good things to start on because they are flat and have no legs," she explains. "Apart from being difficult to carve, legs are delicate things that often break."

Ducks have a great appeal to the British sense of the ridiculous and they are also things of great charm and beauty. A duck carving is a comforting thing to have in the home.

There are an estimated 500-600 decoy



At home in the Mendip Hills, Sophie Ridges and her decoy ducks

Photograph: John Lawrence

Pensthorpe Waterfowl Park, Fakenham in Norfolk learnt on a Bob Ridges course and perfected her art on several courses in the USA.

"Last year the event drew enthusiasts from all over the country and sold half of the 350 carvings on show for a total of £3,000," said Mrs Nicoll.

Although they sell their work widely in galleries and at shows a number of full-time decoy carvers also sell them direct. Ted Oxley of Thorpe Bay near Southend has carved since the age of 16 but only took up bird carving full time when he retired from his job as a dental technician last year. He specialises in decoy ducks and usually uses Jelutong — the wood of the "chewing gum

tree" from Malaysia — and English fir, as these woods allow very fine feathered work. A duck can take Mr Oxley two solid months or more to make. Last year, at the annual summer show and competition held by the British Decoy and Wildfowl Carvers Association Mr Oxley won the Best in Show award. Prices average £1,200 to £1,350.

Another of the better-known duck carvers is Guy Taplin, whose flotsam workshops sit on the banks of the River Colne at Wivenhoe on the edge of the Essex marshes. Most of his work is abstract, the ducks being highly stylised. "They are usually just shapes, with no detailed work" he said. "They

sell in the galleries at an average price of £2,000-4,000, though once I sold a big flight on a large base for £10,000."

The styles vary from intricate "feathered" realistic as Sophie Ridges likes to say: "My late husband used to tell his pupils: 'Inside every block of wood is a duck. We carvers delight in setting them free.'

The Decoy Art Studio and Gallery, Hollow Marsh, Farrington Gurney, Avon BS 18 5TX (01761 452075).

The British Decoy and Wildfowl Carvers Association, 6 Pendred Road, Reading, Berks RG2 8QL (01734 311867).

A life in the shift of...

Thula Howard, 25, manageress, The Joke Shop, Margate

"**M**um and Dad bought the shop 26 years ago. Mum ran away from art college to join a fair, met Dad and they settled down in Margate. They bought this shop and the shell shop next door. They divorced: Dad got the shells, Mum got the jokes. Jim, the other assistant, and I have worked here since we left school at 16. I work seven days a week.

In the morning I put stock away and generally tidy up the mayhem from the day before. Every month we get a new delivery of jokes. We've just had new plastic dog turd. It is brilliant. It feels rubbery and you can throw it and it sticks to people.

I love it when you feel you've really helped someone. One lady, who thought her son was nicking money from her handbag, bought a small detonator. He opened the bag and it exploded in his face. She was very pleased with that.

Lads like anything that smells revolting and makes a loud bang. Girls are more into joke cigarettes and soap which turns your face black. We get small kids who've been told off by their parents and who want to make mischief and get revenge and I think, 'Yeah, go for it.'

There's nothing I really hate about my job. Sometimes, if I have a coach-load of old ladies in the back looking at all the sexy stuff and they're screaming with laughter, I think this is one of the best jobs in the world."

Sally Williams

Tel: 0171 293 2222

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A life
in the
shift of...

Made Howard
the difference

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The fact that only subscribers can watch the Big Fight shows that today's choice is no choice

Two unrelated items in this newspaper caught my eye earlier this week. One was an advert for tonight's heavily promoted Bruno vs Tyson world championship boxing match, the other was the news that Sketchley, the well-known dry-cleaners, is to close hundreds of its high-street outlets and set up shop instead in the vast fluorescent-lit sheds of one of the inexorably expanding edge-of-town superstore chains.

By the end of the week these two events had become inextricably linked in my mind, for, in their own ways, both represent contradictory aspects of the fetish of consumer choice that has warped the British body-cultural over the past 15 years.

The promise of successive Conservative governments since Mrs Thatcher was first elected to office in 1979 has been that of a form of

economic liberalism that would somehow bestow upon every citizen the right to choose the way they wished to order their lives. By invoking the free-market spirit of Adam Smith, some form of vote-catching, Mystic Mag hocus-pocus is to close hundreds of its high-street outlets and set up shop instead in the vast fluorescent-lit sheds of one of the inexorably expanding edge-of-town superstore chains.

Citizens or "customers" as they were now increasingly known of free-enterprise Britain were to benefit from boundless choice; the nation would be turned into one giant supermarket and we customers, sporting in the sunlit uplands of a new-found-land of mortgages, school fees and shares in what were once public utilities, would pursue the high life, indulging in a boundless cornucopia of goods and services. No longer would nannying state com-

missars tell us what we could or could not have, or what was good for us and what was not.

In future, when we turned on the television, we would have a choice of a dozen channels with the promise of many more to come. Standing at a London busstop we would choose between green, day-glo and buses the colour of Refreshers packets: no more tyranny of the standardised red double-decker (note the dictatorial, Communist-inspired colour) for us.

At railway stations we would deliberately miss the 10 o'clock Tesco express (don't miss the onboard shopping facility), so that we could catch the following 10.30am Heineken flyer, the train that reaches parts of Britain no other train can reach (customers, joining at the Paddington station shop, please note the pub car situated

towards the centre of the train). By the year 2000 (when parliament is to be privatised and every MP sponsored by a company, nothing new there), everything we eat, breathe, buy, use and wear could well be put out to tender. How about a choice of lip-smacking tuckwaters (including your choice of Cedric Brown's, the senior citizen's favourite with natural gas, and Frank Bruno's Old Time spearmint 'n' prawn cocktail flavoured brought to us by rival companies)?

Is all this nonsense? Yes, but so is the new culture of choice. We

may have more television channels than ever before, but, if you want to watch Frank Bruno and Mike Tyson knocking the testosterone out of one another tonight, you will have to be a subscriber to Rupert Murdoch's Sky TV and pay an extra £14.95 on top of your subscription for the privilege. You cannot see the Big Fight if you do not. In the bad old days of the choice-free Gestapo state, Frank and Mike would have been slugging it out on BBC or ITV and anyone could have watched for the cost of their annual TV licence.

Recently, Murdoch tried to buy the television rights for the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games. If he had succeeded and if you had wanted to take part (from the comfort of the living-room sofa while tucking into your choice of takeaway pizza, burger or sushi), you would have had to buy into Murdoch's empire

and attach one of those disfiguring satellite dishes to the side of your house. The fact that only Sky subscribers can watch tonight's Big Fight proves that today's choice is no choice.

The same is true of this week's news from Sketchley, in moving their dry-cleaning outlets to banal supermarkets on the edge of town, they are part of a conspiracy to force us into the jaws of these retail dinosaurs. There are people who claim to prefer supermarkets to street markets and high-street shopping parades. They remain, for me at least, an enigma. Quite why anyone would prefer a perpiring continental-style lettuce shrink-wrapped in plastic when fresh green leaves are for sale at lower prices from robust market stalls is quite beyond me (beyond our European neighbours, too). The supermarket may well offer a

galactic choice of cheeses air-freighted from exotic parts and pre-washed fruits of paradise from the South Seas, but what choice does it offer those who either cannot get to out-of-town supermarkets or want to shop in the very market towns and high streets they serve to destroy?

If I cannot have my clothes dry-cleaned in the high street, I am pressurised into joining the supermarket set; because I think supermarket culture is damaging our national culture. I will refuse, but my choice will mean having a wardrobe of grubby clothes.

Perhaps it is time for us to choose to fight the *fatwa* culture of choice. After all, what have we got to lose? Only our satellite dishes, shrink-wrapped ugly fruit and 15 years of demeaning political dogma.

Thomas Stucliffe returns next week



JONATHAN
GLANCY

Lost boys stuck in Neverland

Something's bugging modern man. He's confused, he's irresponsible, he's immature. Mark Simpson argues that our culture offers boys no inducement to grow up

In his next movie, major box-office draw Robin Williams is to play a boy with an accelerated ageing disease. For an actor who began his ascent to fame playing the childlike naif alien *Mork and Mindy*, and has since been a 40-year-old Peter Pan in *Hook* and a boy imprisoned inside a board-game for 30 years in *Jumanji*, this latest boy-trapped-in-a-man's-body role is entirely predictable and entirely in character. More surprising, perhaps, is the news that more men are finding themselves playing Robin Williams.

Is a post-feminist, consumerist age in which being a man is an uncertain business of uncertain worth, Peter Pan-itis, a condition where grown men behave as if they had never grown up at all, has become a benign evolutionary adaptation, filling the world with men whose bodies have passed through puberty but whose minds clearly have not?

Hollywood, naturally, has been riddled with it for some time. All the biggest male stars are textbook examples. In addition to the juvenile antics of Robin, there's Arnie, the middle-aged man with the boyish grin, obsessed with body building and big guns, who, along with his buddy Sly, does his best to promote permanent adolescence as a lifestyle. Then there's Keanu and Brad, the boy-men who don't look as if they've started shaving yet (Brad's goatee looks as unconvincing as Burt Reynolds's hair). Meanwhile, at the back of the class, there's Jim Carrey putting string up his nose and pulling it out of his mouth, and tongue-tied, bashful Hugh Grant, whose *ménage à trois* with Divine Brown and the LAPD was so funny because it was so unlikely (unless you happen to know any British public schoolboys).

That other mass medium – pop music – must bear a great deal of the responsibility for spreading Peter Pan-itis. Beginning by worshipping youth and turning it into the commodity of the late-20th century, it has ended up by populating the charts with ghastly mummified spectres like Mick Jagger and Cliff Richard, performers who became stars when they were young but now employ all the technology thatroyalties can buy to slow the maturation process.

This is not to mention the self-styled "Peter Pan of Pop" himself – Michael Jackson, the child-star who resolutely never grew up, made himself an orphan by becoming his own special creation, and who dubbed his ranch full of fairground rides and exotic animals Neverland. However, the global triumph of Peter Pan-itis seems to have had a peculiar effect on British pop and the new batch of youngish acts. The only way to get attention in British pop these days, apparently, is to be derivative and deferential to your ancestors. Bands like Blur and Oasis sound like *Q* readers singing karaoke. Paradoxically, in a world where boyishness is now preferred to

manliness everywhere, Britpop seems to have decided that the best way to avoid becoming your Dad these days is to impersonate his heroes.

The continued success of boy bands and the Biblical proportions of the deluge of grief from women of all ages which greeted the demise of *Take That* – a band that was rapidly becoming less and less "boy" and more and more "mutton dressed as boy" – illustrate the enormous marketability of boyishness and how attached women have become to young men who seem only too willing to portray themselves as eunuchs refusing manhood in the service of keeping women happy.

But as evidence of how far things have gone, Peter Pan-itis has even infected the world of business. The Microsoft Corporation is looked to as a sort of temple for the future, and its managing director, Bill Gates, is lauded as a culture/economic guru. The oft-told narrative of Microsoft's slaying of the IBM Goliath is also the story of how manhood has been vanquished. The sensitive boys who refused to come out of their bedroom and "mix it" with the other boys, building instead a womb-like world of computers and cyberspace to hide in, have been vindicated by the alienating and infantilising effect of technology and media on us all. The geeks have indeed finally inherited the Earth.

In fact, consumer culture has built a Neverland for us all to inhabit. Those who refuse to dwell there are at best deemed anti-social. Now, when I become a man and put away childish things, I put thousands out of work. Consumer culture has a great deal invested in keeping men immature. The search for pleasure and new experiences, which is an essential part of consumerism, is irreconcilable with the stoicism, self-sacrifice and instinctive distrust of novelty associated with traditional models of manhood. Real men don't eat quiche, the saying goes. Well, we don't need real men any more, replies consumer capitalism in general, and quiche manufacturers in particular.

Moreover, as productive practices change, and part-time/temporary work becomes the norm, the man who laboured five days a week all his working life to bring home the bacon for his family is fast becoming extinct. Changing reproductive practises, meanwhile, are phasing out traditional manhood too – more families are being raised without fathers. Since we remain basically childish until we take responsibility for another life, this is, in turn, likely to produce more Lost Boys.

This certainly appears to be the view of Robert Bly, author of *Iron John*, the American men's movement's central text. He argues that boys don't grow into men anymore because they have lost the institutions of fatherhood that initiated them into manhood. "Misguided feminism", which fails to distinguish between masculinity and patriarchy, and "Pied Piper" popular culture have trapped males in basically juvenile behaviour.

Whatever the truth of this, it certainly seems that even in politics, a world traditionally dominated by Big Daddies, the Peter Pans have taken over. Today, the The Most Powerful Man in the World is a baby-boomer from a broken home, who, despite his grey hair and all the pomp of office, still seems to be the chubby boy photographed eagerly shaking hands with President Kennedy (or even the fat boy who played the tuba at High School, as PJ O'Rourke put it). His arch-enemy, Newt Gingrich, also from a broken home, displays the same boyish eagerness, albeit with a tarmy streak of egomaniac. On this side

of the pond, meanwhile, the future appears to belong to Tony Blair, a man who looks and sounds like every granny's favourite grandson – the library monitor in the Christian Union with a university scholarship lined up.

And in everyday British life, the males who appear to be in the ascendant are those who appear to have renounced the onerous duties of manhood, whatever they might be these days, and opted instead for the mischievousness of boyhood. Nothing symbolises this better than the runaway success of "lad" culture.

Originally a reaction against the goody-goody image of the New Man, who was portrayed as a nappy-changing "feminist" chap, New Lad celebrated naughtiness and irresponsibility. Not for nothing was the phenomenally successful new men's magazine *Loaded* sub-titled "For Men Who Should Know Better". New Lad is and was a purely adolescent idea of masculinity, but one aimed at adult men. In the world according to New Lad, football, beer and babes – the signs of masculinity for a 12-year-old boy – became the measure of all things.

The New Lad version of Peter Pan-itis fed on

the class division of British society, which had designated working-class males "lads" rather than fully formed men with fully formed responsibilities, and yet also bestowed on the class that worked by hand rather than brain the claim to a more "authentic" masculinity, which middle-class "ponces" like David Baddiel attached to themselves by becoming New Lads. It was also in working-class culture that the habit of calling your wife "Mum" was most pronounced, as was the Andy Capp stereotype of the irresponsible hubby who escapes his bruiser spouse by going boozing. Implicit in the New Lad view of the universe, for all its apparent celebration of masculinity and denigration of women, is the acceptance of the idea that woman – or "Mum" – rules the world.

Neverland is booming as males are taking advantage of the opportunity presented by the current "crisis of masculinity" to come out of the toy-closet and declare themselves a boy trapped in a man's body. But this new-found freedom for men leaves women as full-time child-carers. Do women really want to spend their lives alternating between Mrs Capp and Wendy?

"I don't want to be a man. Wendy Mother, if I was to wake up and feel there was a beard!"

"Peter," said Wendy the comforter. "I should love you in a beard"; and Mrs Darling stretched out her arms to him, but he repulsed her.

"Keep back, lady – nobody is going to catch me and make me a man!"

Mark Simpson is the author of *Male Impersonators: Men Performing Masculinity*, published by Cassell, and *It's a Queer World*, published by Vintage in April at £8.99



Geeks inheriting the earth: (clockwise from top) chubbily eager Bill Clinton (Photo: AP); *Take That* and totemic babe, ultra-geek Bill Gates of corporate giant-slaving fame (Photo: AP); and Hollywood boy-man Brad Pitt, on the brink of his first shave



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arts reviews

TELEVISION

A Bloody Art (BBC2)

Is subscription viewing a blow to safer boxing? Jasper Rees on a tricky question

The trouble with boxing is that you can never believe what people say about it. The infatuated romantics who write about it, the helium-blasted hype-merchants who promote it and the lobbyists who seek to ban it each have their own agenda, but all are equally guilty of misrepresentation. Only boxers themselves, for the most part tongue-tied but clear-eyed, have the honesty to call it the hurt business, a Mephistophelean deal that brings pain and pay.

With all hope abandoned of ever again broadcasting the likes of tonight's big fight, the BBC are now free to join the ranks of those who can say what they like about boxing. And although there might be a twist of sour grapes in any documentary that has to rent out its action clips from 'Doch-busters', the BSkyB video library, John Rodda's *A Bloody Art* proved that it is possible to get within striking distance of calm objectivity.

Like a lot of sports reporters pushing retirement age, the *Guardian*'s former fight writer is a fervent nostalgic, in mourning not only for sport's bygone innocence but also, perhaps, for the journalist's more pivotal role before the spread of television. But there is a pragmatic undertow to the mournful reminiscing of boxing's ancients. Rodda argued that if the sport's fatal attraction for lucrative plays any further into the hands of the abolitionists, memories may well be all that's left of boxing.

The equation is simple – subscription viewers want entertainment for their money, which means knock-outs, which raise the toll of death and brain damage. Fighters are trained nowadays, like police dogs, solely in techniques of attack, because the subtler skills of evasion that once kept bumbler boxers on their feet no longer pay the bills. It makes sense that the traditional doctrine of duck-and-weave holds sway only in the amateur ring. With no money at stake, no one bays for blood.

Aside from suggesting a few rule changes to muzzle the potency of the puncher, Rodda seemed resigned to the fact that boxing will never stem the tide of changes wrought by the tempests of television. It's no coincidence that boxing was the first sport to hurl itself into the ravenous maw of satellite, no surprise that there was no place for boxing on Parliament's list of shielded sporting events. You can't safeguard a home on terrestrial television for a sport with no annual niche in the sporting diary, nor anything as basic as a united governing body. WBO, WBA and IBF sound like competing ad agencies, and practically are.

For anyone with an eye on the calendar, Rodda's gloomy forecast of storms ahead for the hurt business was, on two counts, a wry bit of scheduling. It went out on the eve of another thespian night for the sport, in which the dally costumed participants resemble actors in a sort of blood theatre. The transmission date also happened to be the Ides of March, summoning a vision of all those boxers stabbing Harry Carpenter in the back. *Et tu, Bruno?*

THEATRE The Undertaking, Albany Theatre, London

Philip Osment's tangled web of recrimination in the wake of an Aids death is under-directed, under-edited and under-achieving. By Paul Taylor



Brotherly love and hate: Gary Liburn and Liam Halligan as straight Patrick and gay Michael

Photograph: Stuart Morris

The *Undertaking*, a new play by Philip Osment, concludes with camply costumed obsequial rites. A group of his close (and not so close) friends form a line by the edge of a cliff on a remote island off the Irish coast and, to the strains of a Mahler tape, toss the ashes of Henry, a gay man who has died of Aids, in the direction of America. There is no wind that day, the deceased, while on their minds and lips, does not end up in their hair and eyes. That's a rare stroke of luck for, up to this point, their mourning has not been granted room for much dignity.

If this were a TV movie, Henry's estranged mother and his one surviving gay lover would meet and, after a frosty, tense start, progress through a course of mutual understanding that would leave them both with higher diplomas in emotional maturity. *The Undertaking* is at a far remove from such a formula. Henry's relations are barely mentioned, and in so far as this ensemble play can be said to have a central character, it's Michael (Liam Halligan), an ex-lover who now lives in a sexless sort-of-marriage to their joint friend, Sheila (Patricia Ede).

Michael flunked out of taking any responsibility for Henry during his final illness, though this did not stop him from picking up Eamon (John-Lloyd Stephenson), the young, black male nurse who was in attendance. Peeved at the presence of this camp hawk on their expedition, Henry's last (now HIV positive) lover, Howard (Derek Howard), also suspects that Sheila exercised her influence on the dying man to make Michael his main beneficiary.

Osment's last two plays (*The Dearly Beloved* and *What I Did*

in the Holidays) have prompted comparisons with Chekhov for their ability to orchestrate group scenes where everyone is pulling in contrary directions, and for their sharp but unjudgemental eye for the tragicomedy of human behaviour. *The Undertaking*, though, has the feel of something that should have been pushed through further drafts. A tell-tale sign is that Osment, instead of ploughing straight to the heart of the story, doodles at the outset with needless scenes of desultory preparation for the trip. The dialogue establishing the tangled web of relationships and the complicated biographical background sounds like something that has been written as much for the author's benefit as ours; neither the script nor James Neale-Kennerley's under-directed production gives the characters enough to do during this part.

There's one very funny outdoor scene in the second half where all the characters are under the influence of Ecstasy, except for Michael's straight farmer brother Patrick (Gary Liburn), whose mix of bemusement, tolerance and prejudice at homosexuality is nicely captured. Here the material has the space to breathe. But there's an awkward distribution of emphasis again towards the end with a soap-opera rush of wounding home truths, revisited resentments and uneasy reconciliations. We learn that Michael, as a little boy, stoutly defended his brother from a paternal beating; what turned him into a slippery, shier-away from responsibility remains, however, a bit of a mystery.

To 23 March. Booking: 0181-692 4446

BLUES

Jimmy Rogers, Belfast

Muddy Waters' mojo worker, the man to blame for heavy metal, awes Colin Harper

He was born Jimmy Lane in Mississippi in 1924 and has played guitar alongside the greats of the blues since 1947. If Jimmy Rogers told you he was the blues there wouldn't be many contenders still around to argue the toss. His early recording career, under the Rogers pseudonym or with late harmonica genius Little Walter Jacobs, ran parallel with that of Muddy Waters. When Chess finally allowed Waters into a studio with a full electric band, Rogers was the man who plugged into a primitive amp and blistered on the songs that fired an island of white, middle-class, British, would-be guitar heroes.

Between 1951 and 1955, Waters's band defined Chicago blues with the original versions of virtually all the songs that have cropped up on Yardbirds albums and beer commercials ever since, after which Rogers went out on his own with a stream of generic US solo hits. Gary Moore's recent cover of one, "Walking By Myself" ensured that he needn't work again. So to see a towering figure of 20th-century music subjecting himself to long drives and plane rides round the outer reaches of Europe at such an age is an awesome thing. It's all he knows, apparently, and what would he do if he stopped? The fact is that Rogers's status is beyond contention. Furthermore, he can actually still produce the goods.

Arriving into Belfast from London via Dublin barely an hour before showtime, the whole band – leather trenchcoats, big jewellery and old-time courtesy in tow – were in a visibly exhausted state. The gig was in the Empire Music Hall, Belfast's most sumptuous "new" venue – which was probably still holding custard pie acts when Rogers was preparing himself to take a good deal of the blame for heavy metal, half a century back.

The band featured Jimmy Lane Jnr on lead guitar, Barrelhouse Chuck (yes, really) on piano/vocals, Freddie Crawford on bass, ex-Ray Charles man Ted Harrow on drums and the steaming Scott Bradbury on harp. Rogers himself came on in the fourth number. There was a tangible feeling of being in the presence of someone whose achievements are almost beyond comprehension, and a last link to another age.

Impressively tall, dressed in black and gently but effectively stroking a black Gibson 355 with no effect pedals whatsoever, he radiated a love for his craft and a delight to be here and playing for an audience. He introduced the numbers he knew we all knew – "Big Boss Man", "Walking By Myself", and intoxicating, fiery "Mojo Working" – with pristine clarity, and scattered mischievously through the ones not even his band members, it transpired, could put a title to.

"I'm tired and I'm travelling," began one song, and discreet enquiries yielded only blank expressions afterwards from the players in the dressing room. He was probably making it up, but that's the essence of the blues and this was certainly the real thing.

CLASSICAL The Fifties: Towards the Millennium / CBSO, Simon Rattle. Jan Smaczny applauds an outbreak of tonality in the music of a maligned decade

CBSO's second main concert in their celebration of the 1950s revealed a quite different side of this much-maligned decade. An outbreak of tonality in the shape of Martinu's rarely heard oratorio *The Epic of Gilgamesh* and Shostakovich's Tenth Symphony did much for everyone's understanding of the Fifties, complementing rather than contradicting the modernist orgy of Messiaen and Stockhausen at their most uncompromisingly featured in their first concert.

Gilgamesh was a brave choice. It's an elusive work whose obscure, ancient Sumerian text (especially unhelpful in the English translation of Campbell

Thomson which Martinu used) can seem to ask more questions than it answers. Musically it also poses considerable problems for the performers. Martinu's spare lines and quirky sense of motion add up to the sort of piece that only "comes together" after much effort, late in the process of rehearsal.

CBSO began its exhumation of the score by commissioning a revision of the libretto. Amanda Holden's make-over not only banished the odd "snood" and "awn", but made the whole text far punchier and comprehensible for performers and audience. The finished product from choir, orchestra and soloists must rank among

Rattle's finest rehabilitations, proving beyond doubt the viability of this unsetting masterpiece. The story of Gilgamesh may be nearly 5,000 years old, but it sprang to life with searing immediacy. The sense of involvement from the soloists, in particular Rita Cullis and David Wilson-Johnson, was complete. Rattle handled the accompaniment with profound insight, turning a score which, in the wrong hands, can sound close to organised chaos, into a miracle of luminosity.

And then there was the chorus: it would be hard to imagine a more thrilling rendition of Martinu's angular, bittersweet harmonies. Their richness

of tone, razor-sharp ensemble and above all, near-superhuman clarity of diction made this their most memorable outing of recent years. The only slight miscalculation in an otherwise richly convincing performance was the decision to divide the brief stretches of spoken narration between the male soloists. Part of the secret of Martinu's storytelling is the distance a separate narrator provides.

The contrast between the sober clarity of Martinu's vision of ancient mythology and one of Shostakovich's strongest, and most personal, symphonies was bold piece of programming. Whether or not

Shostakovich's Tenth, with its ludicrously bombastic finale, is a joke at the expense of a vindictive Soviet regime didn't seem to be the issue at stake. Providing a context for the modern repertoire is one of the most virtuous aims of the "Towards the Millennium" festival. Nevertheless, Rattle and the orchestra left context, not to mention worries about what it all means, behind in a performance that played the work for all it was worth in purely musical terms. The wind solos of the third movement may have developed an almost operatic personality and the fast music had an impassioned conviction which took it

well beyond the abstract, but the performers never fell into the trap of preaching. If their performance didn't quite plumb the depths of one of the 20th century's most tortured souls, it did the equally estimable service of liberating this symphony from the wretchedness of the life from which it sprang.

Simon Rattle and the CBSO perform Britten, Stravinsky and Shostakovich for the final Birmingham concert in the "Towards the Millennium" series on Tuesday. Booking: 0121-212 3333



KEY

EXCELLENT
GOOD
OK
POOR
DEADLY

Overview

Sam Mendes transfers his Donmar Warehouse production of Sondheim's tart, tough and terrific musical dissection of marriage into the West End with the entire company intact.

David Benedict praised the pumped-up energy level when "the enlargement also widens the production's cracks." "There is no getting away from the wit and brio of the staging or the sheer enjoyment of a wonderful cast," conceded the *FT*. "The change is an improvement," pronounced the *Times*. "A bitter-sweet but life-enhancing concoction... works even better," eulogised the *Evening Standard*.

At the Albery Theatre, London WC2 (0171-369 1730) until 22 June.

On general release.

on view

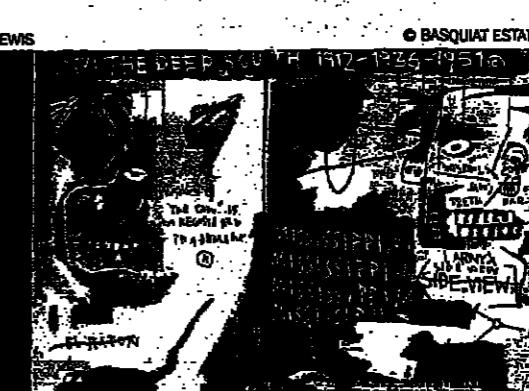
The musical for people who hate them.

Travolta is on *Pulp Fiction* form, but groupies should track down *Moment by Moment* to see just how bad their hero can be.



Continuing in repertory at the Royal Opera House, London WC2 (0171-304 4000) until 29 March.

OUR view

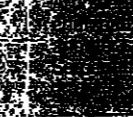


Richard Eyre's Covent Garden production – his first foray into opera – returns with Carlo Rizzi conducting rising soprano Andrea Rost as Verdi's doomed heroine and Ramon Vargas as her lover.

Michael Church found Rost's voice "a little small but with real dramatic presence. In the operatic sense, she will give Georgina a run for her money." Rizzi throws down a most substantial challenge to the cast who follow: "a performance that grows in its vocal stature," applauded the *Times*. "Any soprano capable of putting more established stars to shame," approved the *Evening Standard*.

Continuing in repertory at the Royal Opera House, London WC2 (0171-304 4000) until 29 March.

Company and conductor with Angela Gheorghiu, who returns later this year to the role that turned her into a star.



books

A good yarn in Africa

Peter Godwin's memoir of a Zimbabwean childhood is a ripping colonial tale. By Hugo Barnacle



Scenes from Peter Godwin's family album, clockwise from far left: aged 8, gun and green mamba snake in hand; soldiers from the Zimbabwe national army in 1982; at play with a servant boy; Godwin's father; a young Peter with his sisters, mother and dog



Peter Godwin is best known as the *Sunday Times* stringer in Zimbabwe who exposed the Mugabe government's genocide campaign against the southern Matabele tribe in the mid-1980s.

This memoir of his childhood and youth as a *mukwiri* (whiteface) during the country's messy transition to black rule includes an account of life at a posh Jesuit boarding school which seems to invite comparison with Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist*. Godwin's work inevitably comes off worst, but the book does demonstrate the vivid readability and the magpie's eye for a telling detail that make him an exceptional journalist.

His mother was chief medical officer for the eastern highland district where his father ran a forestry business. "I knew more than other children about dead people because I went with my mother when she dug them up and cut them open." He noticed that "Death could apparently happen to anyone, although obviously it happened mostly to Africans. Whites only tended to die if they were very old. Africans died at any age."

One white person who did meet a pre-

mature end was the Godwins' neighbour Piet Oberholzer, dragged from his car and knifed by terrorists one evening in 1984. The Godwins had driven past a few minutes before the gang blocked the road with boulders, and they still weren't far away when the police call came on the radio. Hanging about at the crime scene while his mother filled in the *Sudden Death Docket*, five-year-old Godwin "wondered if perhaps I could have the knife when they'd finished with it."

The civil war proper did not get going until some years later. For a time, Godwin's mother even drove a 70-mile round trip twice a day taking him to school and back, fearing potholes more than ambushes. In the holidays, Godwin would help out at the clinic, dispensing polio-vaccine sugar cubes or wandering along the queues of patients to see if there were any urgent cases waiting at the back. He remembers Mercy, just 24 and already a mother of six because Shona husbands demanded annual offspring. She browbeat Dr Godwin into prescribing the Pill, unheard of for Africans then, and went on to become the first black family planning counsellor.

There are some fine set-piece recollections: a forest fire; a leopard hunt, and the subsequent negotiations over its body parts; riding the range with Isaac the herdsman, who conversed almost entirely in plonking Shona proverbs and rude folk tales; shining shoes for a black prefect at the Jesuit school, then doing national service to find that black batmen only cared to shine shoes for white officers.

Godwin did his service in the police, considered a better niche than the army, though the work involved was mostly the same, tracking and shooting terrorists. Sometimes the terrorists' trail was easy to follow: "women impaled on stakes. Whole families burned to death in their own huts". Sometimes it required the services of a genuine pygmy tracker.

The terrorists, from Shona and Matabele factions, spent most of their time killing each other rather than the security forces. "I walked around a hut and saw an old woman in a red dress, sitting against the wall... Then I realised her dress had not originally been red, it was soaked in blood. I lifted her head. Her throat had been cut." Godwin is careful to blame Smith's white government, for not conceding power fast enough.

He himself had near misses. His later life was charmed in other ways. He got a place to read law at Cambridge, returning after the war to a job with a "prominent legal firm" in Harare, just like that, and when the law palled, once he'd worked on the successful defence team in Mugabe's show trials of "dissidents", he had no trouble getting freelance work with the London papers. Even when Mugabe tried to have him put away because of the *Sunday Times* story, a detective tipped him off, explaining, "I may have a Shona surname but my mother's family is from Matabeleland. Many of my people have been killed there." Godwin was safe in Botswana by the time they broke down the door. He was later allowed back, "as long as I didn't do any reporting."

Mukwiri: A White Boy in Africa by Peter Godwin Picador, £15.99

Mukwiri is a gripping yarn told with an old hand's professional polish, funny and shocking at once but contriving to avoid any awkward clash of tone. Consider the moment shortly after Godwin discovered the old mine-shafts full of Matabele bodies, when a drunk Shona general pulled a gun on him in front of the entire foreign press corps: "It was rather a beautiful weapon, I noticed, its handle inlaid with mother-of-pearl... 'I am going to kill you,' he announced. 'And then you'll be sorry.' Drink. General" invited his ADC, and produced the somewhat depleted bottle of Johnnie Walker. The general fumbled around for his tumbler and I slipped away."

Successes with girls

Nicholas Wroe finds Kingsley Amis alive and well and writing about Hampstead

This is It
by Joseph Connolly
Faber, £15.99

In Joseph Connolly's second novel, the main character, a seedy landlord posing as a writer, asked whether his much-vaunted book is "a Hampstead novel". The fact he hasn't actually written a novel doesn't prevent him from conceding that, "in many ways it might be". Equally *This Is It* in many ways might be. It is certainly set in Hampstead and maybe criminal extortion, prostitution, drug abuse and sado-masochistic sex are to today's chattering classes what stripped pine and holidays in the Dordogne were to the previous generation.

In *Poor Souls*, his debut published last year, Connolly emerged as an impressively observant stylist, something of a hybrid between Kingsley and Martin Amis, opening as a broadly straightforward comic piece and closing with a young girl being raped with a gun barrel in an alcoholic frenzy. In *This Is It* he has tended to stay more firmly in Kingsley territory, only periodically sliding into Martin scenes when involving gangsters, tarts and a cough-syrup addict called Vole.

This Is It opens with Eric Pizer, the bogus author and resident landlord of a block of bed-sits in Hampstead, being knocked down by a bus. It's just the beginning of his physical deterioration; he is regularly assaulted throughout the rest of the novel to cruel comic effect. His physical decline is matched by an increasingly precarious grasp on a personal life complicated by financial, logistical and structural problems – even his house starts to collapse.

Eric, like all the other characters as it turns out, has lots of secrets, most of them involving women. Decrepit, selfish and transparently duplicitous, Eric's habitual approach to women is to boast how he "put her down with wit and concision" ("Oh do fuck off, Fiona"). Yet a string of attractive, sexually inventive and sometimes even young women make themselves available to him. Glorifying in the astonishing powers of sexual attraction exercised by shabby, bookish, middle-aged men is becoming a Connolly trademark. It could be seen as creepy, but taken in tandem with his wider assessment of women in *This Is It*, it can assume a more elevated meaning. The depiction of Helen, a teenage daughter of Eric's friend and therefore only reluctantly allowed to worship him, as "not neurotic like most women are, but completely bloody asylums-standard mad", almost transforms one man's lechery into another man's homage.

But no amount of speculation as to Connolly's PC quotient alters the fact that he really can write. There is cringingly accurate dialogue, a morbid appreciation of downward mobility ("redundancy pay is the demob suit of the Nineties") and a robustly fantastic approach to characterisation. If he is at his best on modern manners – particularly in scenes involving food with some terrifying dinner parties and a fiasco in a restaurant – he also provides a convincingly funny and sad core to the motivations of his unsympathetic cast as they negotiate the half-lit world of middle-class penury.

The novel ends surprisingly neatly, although not neatly enough entirely to tie up all the foregoing mayhem. While this points to an increasing control over his vulgarly readable talent, it gives little notion of where Joseph Connolly will go from here. He has moved from unpublished novelist to what looks like a literary fixture in about a year.



Audiobooks

The Last of the Mohicans
read by Larry McMurtry

Our Game
read by John Le Carré

can't quite account for the magnetism of Larry McMurtry's mellifluous reading of James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* (Recorded Books, 15hrs 30m, £47, or call 0171-731 6262 for mail-order rental). It is quite simply unturntable; maybe that's what books of legendary fame are about.

Christina Hardymon

Darkness at the heart of Mann

Peter Parker is absorbed by the secret life of 'the last great European man of letters'

Thomas Mann, by Ronald Hayman, Bloomsbury, £25



Thomas Mann in 1916: sexual fixations were transfigured in his work

In the final sentence of this long, over-detailed but largely absorbing biography, Ronald Hayman describes Thomas Mann as "the last great European man of letters". He died in 1955, and it is hard to think of a writer since who has had so solid an international reputation not only as a bestselling novelist but also as an all-purpose intellectual heavyweight. His life was punctuated by public readings of work in progress, lectures, monumental essays, testimonial dinners, and the bestowing of laurels and prizes. Until forced into exile by the Nazis, he lived a well-ordered life in Munich with his wife and children – the epitome of bourgeois respectability.

The terrible personal cost of maintaining this public image is what provides Hayman with his principal theme. The real man, as he skilfully and persuasively demonstrates, is to be found in the books. "Thomas Mann's work," he tells us, "is full of self-portraiture, and none of his characters tells us more about him than Aschenbach."

The protagonist of Mann's beautifully compact tale – a superb miniature in an œuvre not otherwise characterised by concision – comes to Venice in order to take a holiday from a life devoted to "rigid, cold and passionate duty". A similar impulse must have led Mann to write his diaries, in which he describes his obsessions with a succession of young men and boys similar to the story's Tadzio. It seems that none of these passions resulted in anything more physical than the occasional kiss, which is just as well since the original of Tadzio was a mere 10 years old and his successors included both Mann's son Klaus and his grandson Frido.

Sexual restraint may explain why Mann's erotic fixations maintained their power over him and became transfigured in his work. It has often been said, usually by alarmed critics, that *Death in Venice* is not

a story about an old man's pursuit of a young boy; this is partly true, but there would have been no story at all had not the susceptible Mann become captivated by the beautiful Wladyslaw Moes, who years later vividly recalled the man "who'd been watching him wherever he went", and who remembered "an especially intent look when he and the man were together in the elevator" of the Hotel des Bains.

Although Mann incorporated innumerable details from his 1911 Venetian holiday into *Death in Venice* – including the mysterious gondolier and the ancient dandy, both of whom take on roles that are heavy with symbolism – he excludes his wife, who was with him at the time. (Aschenbach's wife is conveniently absent.)

In spite of a marriage lasting 50 years, and to all appearances characterised by devotion, Katia Mann was often as sidelined in her husband's life as she was in his fiction. He had married her virtually on the rebound from a four-year friendship with a painter called Paul Ehrenberg, a relationship Mann always considered the "central emotional experience" of his life. Ehrenberg was the same age as

Mann and therefore held out possibilities very different from those of minors in sailor suits, but even had there been any suggestion that the two young men might live together, Mann would have been too aware of his reputation (established during this period with the publication of *Buddenbrooks*) to have risked it.

Despite being Jewish in a society that was already rife with anti-Semitism, the wealthy, cultured and attractive Katia Pringsheim was quite a catch. Hayman describes Mann's courtship of her as "assiduous" rather than emotionally committed, and it is possible he was physically more attracted to Katia's twin-brother. He was not, however, searching for a lover, but for a wife, and in as much as he and Katia enjoyed a companionable marriage and produced six children, they both fulfilled their stated roles. Emotional and sexual fulfilment was another matter, however. "It can hardly be a question of actual impotence," Mann noted after a failure in the marital bed. What would happen if a young man were at my disposal? The answer is probably: not much. Mann's children deserve a book

to themselves, and certainly more attention than they receive here. The most gifted were the two eldest, Erika and Klaus, both of whom were writers and homosexuals, which makes their relationship with their father particularly interesting. Born almost exactly a year apart, Erika and Klaus were especially close and apparently predestined to be twins.

Erika became Mann's invaluable amanuensis, but Klaus's principal hold upon his father's attention was as a burgeoning 13-year-old, surprised one evening romping naked around his bedroom. A later glimpse of Klaus with his shirt off made Mann wonder whether he had lost all interest in heterosexuality, and this potent image surfaced many years later in the description of Joseph in Mann's biblical tetralogy of novels. Grown up, Klaus was of less interest to his father, who refused to interrupt a lecture tour when his unhappy son eventually committed suicide.

The complicated dynamics of Mann's relationships with his children remain rather sketchy but elsewhere Hayman's book is extremely thorough and, even when dealing with such potentially explosive matters as incest and pederasty, remains admirably level-headed and unjudgemental. What emerges clearly is that Mann's story is essentially a tragedy. But in spite of his pomposity, his chiliness, his ruthlessness and selfishness, he remains curiously sympathetic.

At the age of 75, Mann enjoyed a final, preposterous flirtation with a hotel waiter. "World fame means a great deal to me," he wrote, "but it is nothing in comparison with a smile from him, the look in his eyes." Naturally, it came to nothing, and Mann wrote his own epitaph: "It will probably be a relief – the return to work as substitute for happiness. That is how it must be. It is the condition (and the origin?) of all genius."

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• A biography of the novelist Kingsley, who died in 1911, is the latest in a series of books on British writers. Kingsley's life and work are well documented, but the book is perhaps most interesting for the insights it provides into his personal life, particularly his relationships with women. The author, Stiles Wroe, has conducted extensive research and interviews with family members and friends to create a detailed portrait of Kingsley as a man and a writer.



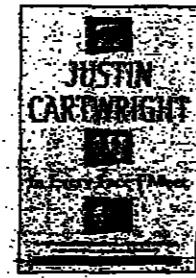
Josephine Connolly, her £15.99

Paperbacks



Reviewed by Emma Hagestadt and Christopher Hirst

In Every Face I Meet by Justin Cartwright (Sceptre £5.99). Shortlisted for last year's Booker; this is the story of a February day in 1990, and of two Londoners in particular: Anthony Northleach, an amiable, rugby-playing advertising executive and Chantelle Smith, crack addict and prostitute. More comfortable inside Anthony's head than in Chantelle's, Cartwright engineers a fatal collision of their two worlds in an unlit street in South London. An indictment of Thatcher's Britain, but works better as an anthropological study of late 20th-century urban man.



The Apartheid of Sex by Martine Rothblatt (Pandora, £7.99). With the zeal of the missionary, and the persistence of a lawyer (which she is), Rothblatt preaches the gospel of Transgenderism, and the joyful message

that just because you're born with a penis doesn't mean you're a man. She takes up the nature versus nurture debate, but waits until the last chapter to reveal her own colours: once a man she is now a "transperson" who enjoys a "wonderful unisex lesbian marriage" and midnight meals in Georgetown, "eyes sparkling in the candlelight".

After the Fair by Jo Riddett (Headline Review, £5.99). In old age Connie and Gledwyn Geddes find themselves back at Wickenwood, a Victorian pile built on the profits of tinned meat and Northern gumption. Brother and sister have never been close, and with the arrival of their respective children and grandchildren for the summer fair, Connie retreats to her room to pop paracetamol and brood on the passage of years. A

melancholy novel which details the gin-and-tonic haze of a failed Fifties marriage and the "dread octopus" of family ties.

From Sea to Shining Sea by Gavin Young (Penguin, £6.99). These stateside jaunts from a top-notch travel writer follow historical trails with varying success. His account of General Sherman's epic march through the Confederacy is a triumph, combining past horrors and modern resonances. But an early attempt to see modern LA through the eyes of Philip Marlowe is marrred by weak pastiche. You've got to admire Young's spirit. After being told he should return in the sub-zero winter to see the real Yukon, he does just that.

Casting Off by Libby Purves (Sceptre £5.99). Deep down you hope head-girl Libby Purves won't be good at everything, but her first novel scores a perfectly competent B+. The story of

Joanna Gurney, wife, mother (and part-owner of the "The Bun in the Oven" tea shop) who sails off in the family yacht leaving her husband fuming on the quayside. Might have been even jollier with Sandy Toksvig on board.

The Englishman's Flora by Geoffrey Grigson (Helicon, £12.99). Long-awaited reprint of the gruff poet's magisterial reference work – a wonder both for its range of botanical lore and quirky erudition. Fatal to skip through, you'll be detained on every page. Did you know cuckoo-pint derives from *pintle* or *penis*? Or that Ragwort was ridden, broomstick-style, by fairies? This book is as refreshing as a bouquet of wild flowers.

The Village that Died for England by Patrick Wright (Vintage, £8.99). A long (400 pages) but engaging dissertation on Tyneham, an idyllic Dorset hamlet taken over for tank-training in 1943. Somehow, the military never got round to returning it, though they're very proud of recent conservation work. As a symbol of a lost England, Tyneham has been appropriated by romantics and right-wingers, ranging from PD James and Prince Charles to the National Front.

Private Myths: Dreams and Dreaming by Anthony Stevens (Penguin, £8.99). A Jungian analyst probes the world of dreams – in particular, how they relate to our evolutionary development. Hitler dreamed of being buried alive (and so escaped that fate in reality), while Descartes conceived melons and a unified mathematical theory. Stevens is a stimulating writer, though the reader has to negotiate hard-core Jungian concepts – the "suprapersonal Atman", the "Oneness of Everything" etc.

Who's reading whom?

Carmen Callil finds wonderful relief in the romantic pleasures of *Desert Places* by Robyn Davidson (Viking)



I'm having to read three novels a week for the book I'm writing about fiction since the 1950s, so Robyn Davidson's earthy account of her time with the nomads of the Thar desert in Rajasthan is wonderful relief. Ten years ago she crossed the Australian desert by camel – so the physical hardships she finds are not unexpected. But the nomads' poverty and isolation is their ancient way of life simply cannot stand up to the strains of the 20th century and to India's expanding population. They are increasingly obliged to settle in order to lay any claim to territory with catastrophic results.

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James Boswell's *The Life of Samuel Johnson* is the most celebrated biography in the English language. Based on a deep personal friendship and enhanced through meticulous research, Boswell paints a portrait of a man at once melancholic yet witty, dogmatic yet possessed of a powerful common sense, overbearing yet capable of great kindness. Read by David Rintoul, this is a remarkable evocation of a remarkable man.

Set in post-war Los Angeles, *Devil in a Blue Dress* is a tale of murder and double-crossing as black war-veteran Easy Rawlins is hired

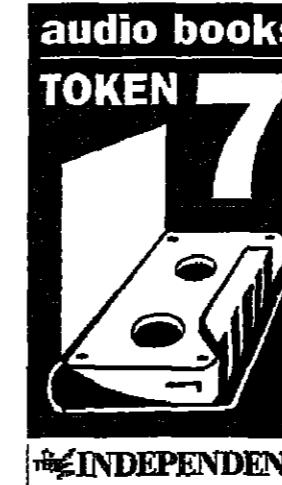
to track down jazz-club aficionado Daphne Monet. This gripping tale, with brilliant dialogue and a strong film noir feel, is read by Oscar nominee Paul Winfield.

The tiny, inter-dependent community of San Pedro Island is thrown into confusion when a fisherman is found drowned and a Japanese American is charged with his murder. *Snow Falling on Cedars* by David Guterson is a gripping, densely atmospheric masterpiece of suspense and is read by Tim Pigott-Smith.

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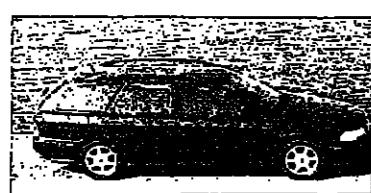
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road test
Volvo S40

The S40 proved that Volvos did not have to be dull to be safe. Volvo's quest to sharpen its image has now been taken a step further with the launch of two glamorous new mid-range models. Out goes the traditional chisel-edged styling and in come chic and sensuous curves.

Bridging the gap in price and size between the 400 and 550, the new 405 are the product of a collaboration with Mitsubishi. The four-door S40 and five-door V40 live up to expectations on most fronts, including packaging, roominess, quality, appointments and comfort.

The seats (based on the 850's) and the driving position are first class and the safety features, which include anti-lock brakes and front and side airbags, are unsurpassed at this level.

Dynamically, however, the new Volvos struggle to meet class benchmarks. Performance of the top 2.0, powered by a four-cylinder version of Volvos modular fives and sixes, is no longer competitive. Acceleration is spirited only when the rather vocal engine is extended.

With optional stiff sports suspension and wide tyres, the Volvo handles crisply. Normally sprung and shod, however, they feel a bit vague and ungainly on the corners, though never less than uncrossingly secure. Tires, it seems, are the key to sharp handling. Various option packs (Comfort, Luxury, Audio, Sport, Family) mean buyers can specify what suits their needs and pocket.

Roger Bell

Specifications

Volvo S40 four-door 1.8, from about £14,000. Engine: 1731 cc, four cylinders, 16 valves, 115bhp at 6000rpm (137bhp for 2.0). Five-speed manual gearbox, front-wheel drive. Top speed 121mph (130mph 2.0), 0-60mph in 10.3 seconds (9.1), fuel consumption 34.7mpg.

Rivals

Audi A4, BMW 3-series, Citroen Xantia 1.8, Ford Mondeo 1.8, Mitsubishi Carisma 1.8GLS, Peugeot 406 1.8, Vauxhall Vectra 1.8.

Selling your car without getting stung

And how you can get ahead in the part-exchange game. By James Ruppert

Gleaming in the showroom is the new car of your dreams. Parked outside is your old nightmare of a motor. In order to afford the new car you must sell the old one. Of course, the car salesman is all too willing to help out by inviting you to do a part exchange. That sounds like a sensible and simple solution to your problem, but have you ever stopped to consider what's in it for them? There really is more to the part-exchange game than just swapping old for new.

A car dealer only offers the trade value, nothing more, and sometimes less. This is effectively the wholesale price for a particular model. Adjustments are made for condition, age and mileage and there will be furtive glances into the car trade price bibles (*Glass's Guide* and *Cap Black Book*) to confirm that figure. However, that is rarely the amount which will be offered. In order to strike a deal on the spot a salesman uses the profit on the new car to inflate the trade-in value of the old car. But the customer loses out, because negotiating a discount on the new car is not on.

You can win at the part exchange game, though, by doing a little research and uttering the magic words "price to change". All you need to discover is the lowest retail price of the new car and the real trade value of the part exchange, the difference between the two is the price you want to pay. Firstly, buy a price guide from your newsagent, these are small format magazines (such as *Parker's*) which are the public's equivalent of the trade guides and accurate enough. It will reveal how much your car is worth to the car trade. To double check this figure and for a local perspective, ring up some car dealers and offer to sell them your car and see what they quote.

If the replacement car is secondhand, using the guide calculate the difference between trade and retail price to "guessimate" their profit. That is the figure which you need to erode to get the best deal. If you are buying a new car then the best policy is to shop around and find out who offers the best "price to change", the difference between what you get for your old car and the price of the replacement.

One of the best tactics is to negotiate on the new car without mentioning a



part exchange, secure a good discount, then at the last moment introduce your old car. As the salesman has invested lots of time he won't want to double back. Even better, breeze into the showroom without a car. For the best way to get an decent motor deal is to sell privately then go cash in hand to the dealer and negotiate from a position of strength.

Welcome to plan B: selling your car privately. This way you get more than the trade price, but also several times more hassle. Never mind, roll your sleeves up and clean that car; if you can't be bothered, get a valet company to do it for you at around £30 to £50. Dirty cars don't sell, or at least don't sell for as much as clean ones. Tidiness and shininess can add a couple of hundred to an otherwise ordinary £2,000 car.

Next, gather together any information you have: handbook, old MOTs, service history, warranties, receipts for any garage work and parts, then put them in a file. This always creates a good impression with buyers, because anyone who keeps paperwork this neat, must also have a neat car - well that's the theory anyway. Another way to attract buy-

ers is to set a fat selling price. Look at local private advertisements to see what similar cars are being offered for.

Set a minimum figure which is financially acceptable to you, because no one pays the asking price these days and you will be expected to negotiate downwards. For instance: you need a minimum £2,500 to put down as a deposit; cars similar to yours advertised for up to £3000, then £2,750 has to be attractive to buyers yet leave room for manoeuvre.

It is vitally important to advertise in the right medium. Cheap cars, hatchbacks, saloons and estates up to £3,000 sell better in a local paper, or free ads publications. Specialist cars like off-roaders and sports cars - as well as more expensive vehicles - ought to be sold in the relevant sections of the local *Auto-trader* publication which feature thumb-sized snaps and ads. Prestigious and expensive cars £15,000-plus should find their way into up-market newspapers.

If your car is old enough to count as a classic, then choose any of the monthly publications, or the *Classic Car Weekly* newspaper. Write a brief ad, stating

model, mileage, year, colour and price. Now wait for the phone to ring. Most people are genuine, but some criminals can take advantage of an obliging seller so it is important to keep control of the situation. Make appointments to suit you and be strict about time keeping. Insist on identification, seeing a driving licence and insurance cover. Never let customers drive off on their own and never get into a car with the buyer and a couple of his burly mates.

Always have at least one friend or member of the family with you when a buyer calls. Be polite and honest, but make no representations about the condition of the car. Never hand over the keys unless you have the money in your hands. There are lots of stolen building society cheques and bank drafts around, so do not accept these unless you go with the buyer to the relevant bank or building society to confirm that the draft is genuine. Finally write a brief note giving basic details of the parties involved and a description of the car with the words "sold as seen", and get the buyer to sign it.

It's vitally important to advertise in the correct medium

Selling your car privately

Always clean the car; ensure that a friend, or family member is with you at all times during the sales process; be realistic about the value of your car.

Never let your car out of sight before it has been paid for in cash, or with cleared funds; allow a potential buyer drive the car on their own, without knowing whether they have a driver's licence and insurance; make any promises about the car's mileage, history, or reliability unless you have full documentary proof to support any claims.

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In the US motoring centenary, speed freaks are heading for Michigan

By Phil Llewellyn

America's motor industry is celebrating its 100th birthday this year, but credit for creating the biggest of the automotive world's giants does not go to the likes of Henry Ford, Louis Chevrolet or Walter Chrysler. Instead, the spotlight is focused on two brothers whose name is unlikely to ring a bell. Charles and Frank Duryea were not the first Americans to build a horseless carriage, but in 1896 their Duryea Motor Wagon Company of Springfield, Massachusetts, assembled 13 identical cars. This was the USA's first instance of serial production.

One of those tiller-steered contraptions greets visitors to the mind-boggling Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan, where cars representing dozens of manufacturers vie for attention with everything from musical instruments to a colossal railway locomotive.

Credit for making Uncle Sam a serious contender goes to such far-sighted engineers as Ransom Eli Olds, who started his business in 1897 and became the American motor industry's first millionaire. But the man who really put the world on wheels was Henry Ford, a farmer's son who pioneered the moving production line. It succeeded to such an extent that 15,007,033 Model T Fords were built between 1908 and 1927. There were months when production topped 200,000 - a figure to compare with the 12,000 per month averaged by Britain's long-running Mini. Such economies of scale enabled the Ford's Tin Lizzie's price to be cut by almost 75 per cent. Meanwhile, Ford was paying his workers \$5 a day - double the industry's average.

Factors that included excellent communications soon made Detroit the car world's capital. Today, hosting the annual North American International Auto Show epitomises the big effort that Motor City is making to improve its drab, down-market image. Among other symbols is the riverside Renaissance Centre complex whose Westin Hotel is the world's highest. Views from its revolving restaurant include such spectacular links with the golden age as the art deco Fisher and General Motors' buildings. They stand close to Woodward Avenue, where Charles Brady King became the city's first motorist on



Charles Brady King (right) driving the first car in Detroit

6th March 1896. Henry Ford and his first car pattered along nearby Bagley Avenue a few weeks later - eight years before he founded the Ford Motor Company.

I recently spent a busy week in Michigan, where tributes to the centennial include the Detroit Historical Museum's fascinating Motor City exhibit. Visitors are welcomed by a replica of Charles Brady King's 1896 car, which Mr King built to mark the 5th anniversary of his epochal drive. Reminders of such backroom boys as Charles Kettering (the grandfather of today's starter motor) rub shoulders with, for example, the world's first long-running Mini. Such economies of scale enabled the Ford's Tin Lizzie's price to be cut by almost 75 per cent. Meanwhile, Ford was paying his workers \$5 a day - double the industry's average.

Meanwhile, speed freaks should visit the Motorsport Hall of Fame in Novi, the small town that gave its name to racers that contested such American classics as the Indianapolis 500. Top marks for terror go to the jet-propelled Green Monster in which Art Arfons achieved the fastest speed ever recorded by a vehicle with an open cockpit.

At the other end of the performance scale, 1903's advert for the Oldsmobile concentrated on the difference between modern and traditional power: "Mechanical skill and mathematical exactness eliminate the danger of the horse's uncertain temper, sudden flight and unruly disposition," the blurb proclaimed.

That little gem was spotted at the R.E. Olds Transportation Museum in Lansing, 85 miles from Detroit. The cars on display range from an 1897 Oldsmobile to the latest Aurora. Between those landmarks, the 1937 model is a reminder that Oldsmobile was the first to offer automatic transmission in a mass-produced car. The option cost the equivalent of about £50. One of the post-war era's most notable Oldsmobiles was the awesome Toronado. Launched in 1966, it attempted to reconcile front-wheel drive with a 7.0-litre, 385bhp engine.

A few blocks to the west, Lansing's highly commended Michigan Historical Museum reveals other aspects of the state's key role in the motor industry's development.

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For information about car museums and special centennial events, contact the Michigan Information Centre, 110 St Martin's Lane, London WC2N 4DY (0171 240 1422).

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gardening

What you need is a well-mannered climber

You don't have to grow ferocious roses up your arches and pergolas — clematis, jasmine and campsis are far more easy going. By Anna Pavord

Collapsing pergolas were much on my mind last year and when I wrote about ours falling to its knees, complete with mounds of solanum, rose, wisteria and clematis, many readers wrote in with solutions to the problem. John Iorode of London recommended replacing my larch and elm with steel reinforcing mesh: cheap, thick enough not to rust through and easily available through builders' merchants.

Ruth Clarke of Harrold in Bedfordshire took his advice and is delighted with the result. She has used the mesh for an arch, six feet long with some trellis work adjoining. "It looks quite splendid," she says. "It is strong, lightweight in appearance (important in a small cottage garden), graceful and very functional. Now I need ideas of what to plant over it to have some interest all the year. And no thorns."

I know what she means about thorns. I spent three days last week untangling old growths of Rambling Rector, Kiftsgate and Easlea's Golden Rambler from the pergola, cutting out a proportion of it and re-tying it together with the new wands of growth. With one branch stuck in your hair and another hanging on to your hand with the grim ferocity of a pit bull at bay, you begin to wonder why you grow roses.

Easlea's Golden Rambler has particularly vicious thorns and is a trifling stiff, but despite these drawbacks, it is still one of the best of the roses on the pergola. Pruning it is made slightly complicated by the fact that it is smothered in a very vigorous spring flowering blue, *Clematis macropoda*. Since the rose's legs are bare, it needs this softening skirt, but the clematis winds its tendrils everywhere and you have to cut out the old growths bit by bit in the short lengths left between their handholds. Autumn flowering Viticella clematis are easier to use with climbing roses on a pergola because you can cut all the stems down to within 18 inches from the ground in February and then prune the roses without their interference.

What about the thornless rose, Zephirine Drouhin asks Ms Clarke? What about Kathleen Harrop? I would reply, Zephirine Drouhin is an aggressive kind of pink and slightly too prone to blackspot and mildew for my taste. Kathleen Harrop is a much easier colour, a soft shell pink, but shares the same advantages of being thornless and highly scented and will climb to nine feet if tied in to a support.

In the main, though, Ms Clarke will have to look elsewhere than among roses for climbers to cover her arch and trellis. As in any other planting scheme, she will need some climbers with good foliage to give the bulk and luxuriance that makes a garden feel comfortable. Roses alone would not sufficiently camouflage the industrial underpinning of the structure.

For its airy, ferny foliage, as well as its clusters of flowers (orange, red or yellow, depending on variety) I am very fond of *eccliptacarpus*. It has been the making of an east wall, where I let it loose recently to scramble up invisible lengths of chicken wire fixed to the masonry.

In mild winter it is evergreen. This year it has been cut to the ground by cold, leaving a messy tangle on the wall which will have to be cleared away this month before it starts shooting from the base

again. It is generous in terms of flowering period, starting in midsummer and going on until the first frost. It is also well-mannered when it has to share its living space with another climber. That is more than you can say for honeysuckle which tends to swamp or strangle all but the toughest hosts.

Clematis of course will be near the top of anyone's list for covering an arch such as Ms Clarke has made, but they look very much better if they are grown through some host climber such as a vine, which will bulk up the clematis's own spindly growth. The most successful vine on our pergola is *Vitis vinifera Purpurea* which supports two clematis. One is an alpina, which performs in April and May before the vine has fully leafed up. Compared with most clematis, *C. alpina* is weak in growth, rarely getting beyond 6ft, but it is extremely hardy. Growing with the vine is Frances Rivas which has mid-blue flowers with white stamens. Elsewhere, I have White Columbine, one of the most free-flowering of the alpinas with pure white flowers.

The second of the vine's clematis fills in at the other end of the season, during August and September. It is *C. viticella Etoile Violette* which has rich violet flowers with a creamy little boss of stamens in the centre. This is a vigorous tribe, but easy to manage. They mind wind less than other types of clematis and they do not seem to collapse with wilt, which has just carried away Mrs Cholmondeley on the front of our house.

Ms Clarke says she is hoping to have "interest all the year". She does not say though how big her trellis is and without sufficient space to play with, all year interest is a tall order. If she has not got it elsewhere in her garden, she should plant winter jasmine. In late November it is the most heart warming sight in the garden when everything else is drear and pinched. It needs to be trained up high and allowed to cascade down to display itself most effectively. The growth is lax and easily put where you want it. Through the jasmine you could grow a yellow clematis such as *C. tangutica*. Where height is limited, go for the Helios variety which only grows to about five feet.

C. tangutica is an easy going clematis which you can prune or not as you please. I have one growing through jasmine and I prune it in November, before the jasmine comes into flower. The approved pruning time is February. Elsewhere, *C. tangutica* grows on its own over a stone wall and is never pruned. In terms of flower quality, there doesn't seem much to choose between them, so I would not say that pruning enhances performance. It is useful though to be able to let the host shrub breath for a while without a clematis bearing down on its shoulders.

Campsis, a tropical looking climber, with excellent foliage and brilliant orange red flowers, needs space, as do hop and passion flower. But even without these, Ms Clarke would have flower from the jasmine from November to March, from *C. alpina* during April and May, from the rose for a long period during summer, and from the other two clematis from July through September, when they would be backed by the dusky purple foliage of the vine. In October the vine itself will flare into brilliant prominence before it drops its leaves in front of the emerging flowers of the jasmine. Full circle.



Clematis will be near the top of most lists for climbers. The one drawback is that they tend to look a little spindly if grown on their own — for trellis or arches, set them against vines for added bulk and luxuriance.

Photograph: The Garden Picture Library

gardening

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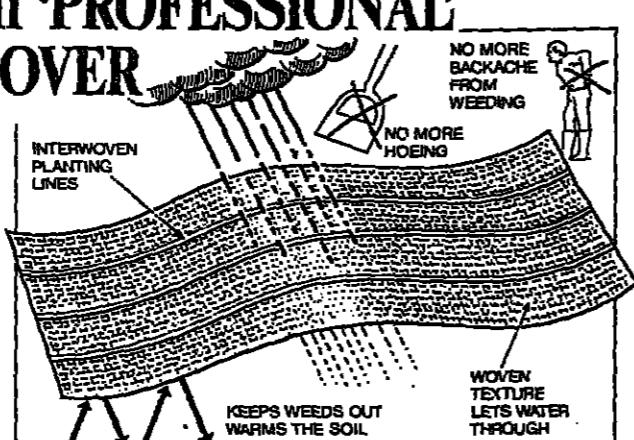


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Anna Pavord



Greenham Common is being transformed into a flower-rich heathland. It's an ambitious and fragile project

Endangered habitats By Malcolm Smith

The peace campaigners who spent so much of their lives on the outside of the security fence around Greenham Common Airbase may soon have a fitting epitaph. For the huge concrete runway – the longest in Europe – along which B52 bombers armed with cruise missiles once hurtled, is being transformed, bit by bit, into flower-rich heathland.

If all of the four-kilometre-long runway and its adjacent taxi-ways are dug up, 60 or so hectares of heathland – rich with heathers, gorse, knapweeds and gentians – could replace them.

The scheme has been promoted by English Nature with the backing of Newbury District Council and the MaD who still own the land.

Sixty hectares of new heathland may not sound much. But, set in the context of the huge area of this exceedingly rich wildlife habitat destroyed over the last century, it's a substantial reversal in fortunes.

Much of Egdon Heath (immortalised by Thomas Hardy in *The Return of the Native*) has been ploughed up to grow cereals and other crops, planted with conifers, dug out for its underlying gravel, and developed for housing and industry. Some has been lost, too, by scrub encroachment, converting it into wildlife-poor birch or pine woodland. Only about a fifth of the area Hardy knew still remains, most of it in small fragments.

Such destruction of heathland has happened elsewhere – on the west coast of Wales, in the Brecklands of East Anglia, on the Cornish coast, in Surrey and in Hampshire: the areas of Britain where the habitat is concentrated. Of the 58,000 hectares of lowland heath now left in Britain, over half of it is in England. This is 40 per cent of the European total. Not all of it is protected by wildlife designations or by planning policies.

The Government-appointed Biodiversity Steering Group has recommended an Action Plan for lowland heathland which could cost between half a million and five million pounds a year, depending upon land purchase and man-

Wildlife sanctuary

Lowland heath is a cornucopia of plants and animals. But more than 80 of its species are conservation concerns. Under threat throughout its world range, the sand lizard – a yellow and black reptile – has disappeared from most of its former heathland strongholds.

The demise and fragmentation of

heathland, uncontrolled fires and scrub encroachment, have all done for it.

But a recovery programme, begun in 1994, is succeeding. Sand lizards have been reintroduced to five former sites where their populations are now monitored. The Action Plan – one of many recommended by the Government-appointed Steering Group – proposes their reintroduction to another 10 sites. Including research and monitoring, the cost of recovering the sand lizard is estimated at £80,000 a year, declining to perhaps £65,000 a year by 2010.

agreement costs. As a minimum, the Steering Group proposes that all remaining lowland heathland should be protected and properly managed to retain its wildlife and that a further 6,000 hectares should be re-established. Greenham Common is such an example.

Yet even this ambitious programme is comparatively small beer. There is an estimated 67,000 hectares of recently modified heathland ripe for restoration.

"At Greenham," says Dr Wanda Foj, English Nature's Conservation Officer for Berkshire, "as

the concrete is removed, the plants from the If the fortunes of the sand lizard are on the up, the fortunes of another heath dweller, the hoverfly – which, with its black and yellow stripes, mimics a wasp – are decidedly down. Seemingly confined to the heaths of east Dorset, the New Forest and the Weald, it is declining dramatically. There have been just six sightings since 1980.

Halting its decline – leave alone reversing it – requires a knowledge of what's endangering it. But other than suspecting that the hoverfly's larvae are predators on particular aphids living in ant nests, very little is known about its needs.

Not surprising then, that the Action Plan stipulates more research on its lifestyle and more survey of past and present sites.

Until this clever little mimic is better understood, conservationists can only assume that protecting more heathland, and managing its sympathetically, does the trick.

How to keep heathland healthy

If left to its own devices, heathland will disappear rapidly.

Trees (pines and birch in particular) will quickly colonise it, growing into thickets, then converting it to woodland of a type which isn't as valuable for wildlife.

To guard against such natural encroachment, most trees have to be cut and removed if they have taken over. Light grazing, with sheep or cattle – ponies in some places – needs to be carried out to keep scrub in check. Different grazing densities in different places produce more habitat diversity and more wildlife.

Rhododendron and bracken, both of which can spread rapidly, need to be controlled by cutting or with safe chemicals. Patches of bare sandy ground need to be created for certain species, such as Yellow Centaury, which is very rare because its habitat is overgrown.

Lowland heath in summer can be a magnificent extravaganza of purples, yellows, pinks and greens with expanses of common heather, gorse, bell heather, cross-leaved heath and fescue grasses. And all with a scattering of purple knapweeds, orchids, violets and many more plants.

All six British reptiles, from smooth snake to sand lizard, are found on it. There are butterflies, grasshoppers, bees and spiders galore. Half of our dragonfly species are found in wetter hollows. But such an environment is not easy to maintain.

Removing grazing, or stopping regular cutting, can have a huge impact on heathland plants. Two botanists, David Pearman and Andy Byfield, have documented such changes by re-recording the plants listed by Professor Ronald Good during surveys of Dorset's heathland in the 1950s.

They found that, of 41 rare heathland plants, all but three of them had declined by half or more. Yellow-flowered Petty Whin, for instance, had declined by 82 per cent; Myrrh Clubmoss, a primitive plant of wet hollows and Pale Dog-Violet, both declined by 88 per cent. Twelve plant species had disappeared altogether.

Some of these losses were the result of the heathland having been obliterated. But many were due to the abandonment of grazing or cutting, and to the loss of bare soil created by animals' hooves or old cart tracks. On the New Forest heaths, where grazing remains a traditional part of the land management, heathland plants have fared much better. Almost all still survive.

Protecting the best heaths with conservation designations is vital. Equally vital is managing them properly to retain their interest, whether this is done by private landowners and farmers receiving management payments through schemes such as Countryside Stewardship in England or directly by conservation bodies such as The National Trust. And, as in the Greenham Common case, recreating more heathland is possible, but at a price.

COUNTRY LIVES



Gordon Lewis, hill farmer, mid-Wales

"The traditional time to start lambing round here is the second week of March, but we aim to be early because we've got prolific breeds of sheep and we get a lot of spare lambs; if we beat the rush we can sell orphaned ones, no problem. Later on they become harder to shift. The sheep right up in the hills lamb later still – early April – to avoid the worst of the weather.

We farm cross-bred sheep while most of our neighbours have pure mountain breeds. That's because as a small farm (160 acres in all), we have to be relatively intensive. We aim to get twins off every ewe each year. The downside is there are a lot of problems with multiple births, so we have to bring them indoors for the lambing. Our neighbours have got the acreage to be content with one lamb per ewe so they keep hardy breeds and delay lambing until the weather gets warmer. Then they leave the ewes to get on with it on their own.

During lambing, someone's got to check the sheep every four hours. So I stay up till three in the morning and then Helen, my wife, gets up at five or six. I come out again a couple of hours later and just keep going until late in the evening. Then I grab a snooze in a chair or something until about two and the whole thing starts again.

You can tell a ewe is in labour because she starts to chatter, to lick her tummy and to walk in circles. Most of the time we have to intervene with the delivery – that's the price you pay for multiple births – so I'll push her to the floor and feel inside. At the height of lambing when you can have 30 ewes in one day, everything can get too much. Then my in-laws lend a hand.

If I have a ewe with one dead and one live lamb, I fetch an orphan and smother it in the live twin's placenta. A ewe's maternal instinct is based entirely on smell. Once she has accepted the orphan I leave them to it.

Sometimes we rear the orphans ourselves – last year we had eight.

Actually it's not that bad; once you've got a lamb sucking a bottle he's very little work. You've just got to remember to refill the bottle four times a day.

Officially, lambing goes on for about six weeks, but it will go on for quite a bit longer this year because we didn't take the tupps out. All our ewes get two chances: if a ewe is barren one year we'll keep her on to the next. We always give one year's grace, even if the ewe is getting on a bit. After two years in a row it's down the road to market – we can't afford to keep them longer than that. This year we're hoping for about 600 lambs from 450 ewes. That's sold, mind, not born – you always lose a few to disease, weather and foxes.

I shear all the sheep myself in late May and early June. That's about 460 of them in all (we don't clip lambs). The wool goes off to Newton where the Wool Marketing Board sells it for us. It's not worth much – a couple of years back we were only getting a few pence per kilo although it's better now. Harvest is another busy time because we produce all our own silage and hay, but can't afford contractors. That means cutting and baling 45-50 acres on our own.

But lambing is much the busiest time of year for us – it is certainly the most exhausting. You don't find me smiling much during March and April."

Gordon Lewis was talking to Bel Crewe

A little local trouble

A single barks rips out from along the hills

Rydal Council is in the dog house, facing accusations of the maladministration of an application for the North of England's first private cemetery. Last year, Farmer Goodwill's Mowthorpe Garden of Rest, an alternative burial site for people wanting their graves marked with trees rather than headstones, was given the green light. Opposition from villagers fearing that Terrington would become known as The Village of the Dead, prompted a re-think. It was then discovered that the council had failed to advertise the plan properly.

Details of a smog-filled future of up to four burials a day circulated. No one seemed to take any notice of the non-polluting approaches. Mrs Goodwill says they will use biodegradable coffins, and that the area will become woodland within 70 years. The Goodwills were asked to re-submit their plans and the council voted against it. They are taking the matter to the Government's planning inspectorate and are reporting Rydal Council to the Ombudsman for maladministration.

Darkness is coming down, but by degrees so infinitesimal and slow that eye and brain cannot measure its descent. Minute by minute, light drains from the wood. Yet still I can see, and if the deer move at all, this is the time at which they will come.

Perched on a high seat 15 feet off the ground, my back against an ash trunk, I have a panoramic view. Across my knees lies a .243 rifle, for I am trying to cull muntjac, or barking deer – the strange little creatures of Asiatic origin which have colonised much of the south of England.

Recent felling of fir has left this part of the forest pleasantly open. Visibility is good, but colours are fading: green of fir branches, russet of dead bracken, ochre of forest floor – all are turning to the "sober livery" of Milton's "twilight gray". While day clings on, I try again to memorise particular lumps: the single rock, the fallen tree trunk, the twisted elder that looks like a deer's head. These are my markers.

Earlier in the afternoon the wind blew viciously

from the east: but now it has died, and in the stillness every sound rings out. Away to my left front a blackbird is mobbing something – probably an owl, for the call is the high, hysterical chatter aimed at airborne enemies, rather than the low tuk, tuk reserved for predators on the ground.

Movement is what I am looking for. With trees and plants motionless, any movement will take my eye. There – a pigeon sweeps in to roost, landing with a clatter of wings, while a grey squirrel runs out on some late errand tips along the springy upper branches of a larch.

To sit here in the wood is imminently therapeutic. My eyes and ears are on full alert, but my mind, lulled by the silence, winds down and

reaches out across time. Perhaps 10,000 years have passed since the last ice age pulled back and carved this hill into its present form. Across my front, 50 yards out, run the ruins of an old stone wall. Old maps show the land beyond it as a field: now a dense mass of scrub and young trees covers it. It is heathland surrounding the runways should colonise naturally. We may have to help by spreading some heather seed. The heathland at the base was cut regularly in the past so scrub hasn't been a problem. But outside the base, some of the heath has been taken over by birch.

Heathland developed, often over millennia from cleared forest. Historically it has been maintained by grazing with cattle, sheep or ponies. An ancient triumvirate of shepherd, sheep and heathland has produced a clutch of names for flowers that colour it, such as Shepherd's Bedstraw, Shepherd's Knot, and Sheep's Bit.

The day is nearly gone. Binoculars still bring objects into bold relief, but the telescopic sight on the rifle gauges light less efficiently, and I can hardly see the cross-hairs. To the naked eye, outlines are becoming blurred: my markers have lost their shapes and are merging into the background.

Then, at last, a definite movement at ground level. Some dark object is coming from right to left, along the line of the ancient wall. Up with the glasses. A fox, framed at one end by its creamy throat, at the other by the white tip of its brush. I watch it pause to sniff a low branch. Then, silent as a shadow, it passes on its way.

A tawny owl hoots. It is time to go. As I reach the foot of the tree, a single bark rips out from along the hill – a muntjac's alarm call or territorial challenge. Ten seconds later another bark echoes into the dark. The animal is too far off to have heard or scented me: it must be feuding with a rival. Nevertheless, I cannot feel that its harsh outburst incorporates a message for me as well – meaning, as it does, "Get lost!"



DUFF HART-DAVIS

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PARIS:
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"Paris isn't a place, it's a passion", I was solemnly assured this week by an expatriate Brit in the French capital. But if this is the case, the city risks pricing itself beyond our affections. Our ardour for the City of Light is being dampened by the depressed and depressing state of Sterling. A generation of travellers brought up to believe that there are, and always will be, 10 francs to £1, is having to come to terms with the idea that nowadays you only get seven and a bit to a pound. The £3 cup of coffee (or, worse in every sense, tea) is no longer a cause for heated discussion on the ferry home - it is the norm. Yet while prices in Paris are going through the *toit*, travelling to the French capital has never been better value. My bus trip from London to Paris and back cost £29; if I had splashed out on a flight, I could have paid as little as £62 return. To boost bookings to the French capital, Air France Holidays has been offering inclusive weekends for the astonishing price of £99 - all of which have been snapped up by bargain-hungry Brits. The problem, as Liz Murray discovered (*opposite*), is that you can easily spend as much again when you get there. So this guide to budget Paris shows you how to enjoy the city without risking bankruptcy.

Simon Calder

Enjoy Paris without burning a hole

HOW TO GET THERE

1 Air on British Airways: London-Paris is the most competitive international air route in the world and, as a result, fares are low. Through your local branch of Lunn Poly, you can get a fare of £69 (including tax) from Heathrow or Gatwick to Charles de Gaulle or Orly. This is not available direct from the airline, which charges £6 more.

2 Air on Saturdays only: the same branch of Lunn Poly should be able to put you on Air India's Saturday flight from Heathrow to Charles de Gaulle, for a total of £62 including tax - possibly the cheapest 747 flight in the world.

3 Direct train: Eurostar (0345 881881) from Waterloo to Gare du Nord. The getaway fare of £59 from Waterloo to the Gare de Nord requires you to spend a minimum of three nights away, and is not available on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. It is on sale until 28 March. Fares rise to £79 thereafter, if you stay away a Saturday night or three nights. The fare is exactly the same from Ashford, 60 miles nearer Paris, and the only benefit you get is free car-parking (offer applies until the end of the month).

4 Train and ferry: British Rail International (0171-834 2345) sells a £55 return ticket for the Charing Cross-Dover-Calais-Gare du Nord trip. The journey takes a shade over nine hours, not least because of the bus connections required at either port.

5 Bus and ferry: Eurolines (0990 143219) will get you from London to Paris and back for £29, sailing Dover-Calais by ferry. You must travel out and back on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday on the 9am service (scheduled to arrive in Paris at 6pm French time, in London at 4pm British time, but may be later). The offer is barred over Easter and the late May bank holiday. Return any time within a month.

6 Hitch-hike: take advantage of the fact that motorists can take any number of passengers through the Channel tunnel without paying extra. Cost: £0 (in theory at least); time: indeterminate, but allow at least eight hours.



WHERE TO STAY

1 Grand Hotel Malher, 5 rue Malher, 4e (42 72 60 92). Métro: St-Paul. The sad little sign by the door, reading "We survived the last three months of '95 by chance", shows how tough the winter has been for Parisian hoteliers. On an opulent edge of the Marais, the Malher was previously a low-budget hotel that has been renovated and enhanced. Single 470F, double 570F.

2 Hotel de la Place des Vosges, 12 rue Birague, 4e (42 72 60 46). Métro: St-Paul. Quiet, prim, and close to the handsome symmetry of Place des Vosges. Single 315F, double 425F.

3 Hotel du Senat, 22 rue St-Sulpice, 6e (43 42 30). Métro: Mabillon. For 601F single or 642F double (breakfast included) you get a big, clean room with a fine balcony and expansive bathroom; more modest rooms are available for around 100F less. Close to St Germain, in a part of town that is too often overlooked.

4 Hotel du Centre, 24bis rue Cler, 7e (47 05 52 33). Métro: Ecole Militaire. The name is misleading, as it is a long hike from the city centre. But rue Cler is a lively pedestrian street, in an area with a pleasing sense of community - more like a provincial village than a Parisian arrondissement. Rooms for 350F, single or double.

5 Marais, 2 bis rue Commisses, 3e (48 87 78 27). Métro: St-Paul. In the real heart of the city, reliable value at 360F single, 390F double.

6 Hotel St Paul, 43 rue Monsieur-le-Prince, 6e (43 26 98 54). Métro: Odéon. The reception area is lavished with Haute Epoque furniture, and guarded by the hotel cat. Each room has a bathroom, TV and minibar. The lowest "rack rate" is 480F single, 550F double, but I secured a discount of 100F just by asking.

... and one real cheapie
Hotel Savoy, 5 rue Jarry, 10e (47 70 03 72). Métro: Château d'Eau. A short walk from the Gare du Nord, the Savoy is nothing like its namesake in London. This version is all peeling wallpaper and creaking floorboards, but a hot shower is included in the rate of 110F single, 140 double.

WHERE TO EAT & DRINK

Breakfast

Rachinel patisserie, 81 rue Saint-Antoine, 4e (Métro: St Paul). This busy, narrow bakery doubles as a cafe, and needs a choreographer to shuffle customers queuing for baguettes as others sample of café au lait. The mouthwatering selection of cakes and croissants is sold at shop prices, so you can set yourself up for the day for as little as 25F.

Lunch

Chartier, 7 rue du Faubourg-Montmartre (Métro: Rue Montmartre). Big, busy and in the fast lane of the tourist trail, but a good venue for midday fuel. Turn-of-the-century décor and waiting staff.

Dinner

Le P'tit Gavroche, 15 rue Sainte Croix de la Bretonnerie, 4e (tel 48 87 74 26; Métro: St Paul). Dine between 7 and 10pm, and a 48F menu in the centre of Paris (and the middle of the gay area) can be yours. On Wednesday I enjoyed a generous plate of *crudités* that would have cost 48F alone in many Parisian restaurants, followed by a delicate French version of shepherd's pie and a hearty bread pudding. You need to swallow a half-litre flagon of house Gamay, price 28F, to break the £10 barrier.

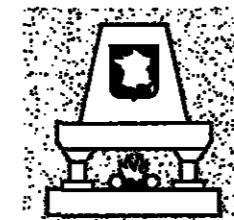
Dessert

Majestic Café, 34 rue Vieille du Temple, 4e. A short step in the direction of the Seventies brings you to the handsome mirrors, elegant woodwork and garish lighting of the Majestic, which styles itself "Bar Rock" and plays Bolan and Bowie loud to prove it. Less rowdy options line the same street.

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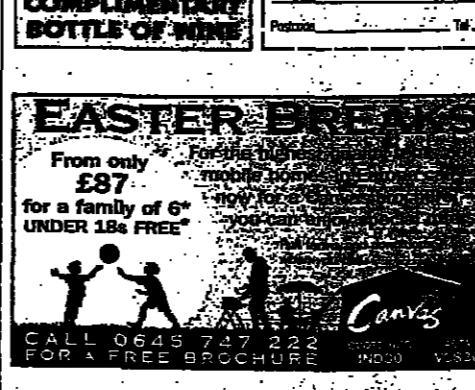
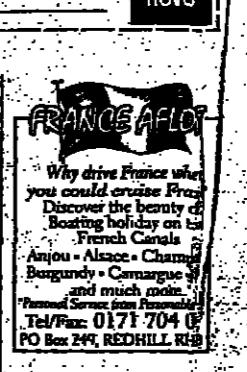
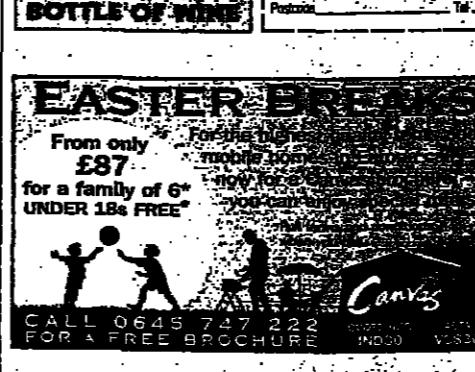
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The 1996 Guide, which costs only £12.95, is available at all good bookshops, at any WHSmith's and at the French Tourist Office, 178 Piccadilly, London W1 VOAL.



hole in your pocket



Opposite: the Chartier Brasserie, photo: Robert Harding picture library; above, traditional Parisian buildings reflected in the steel and glass of a modern structure, photograph Joe Corrigan

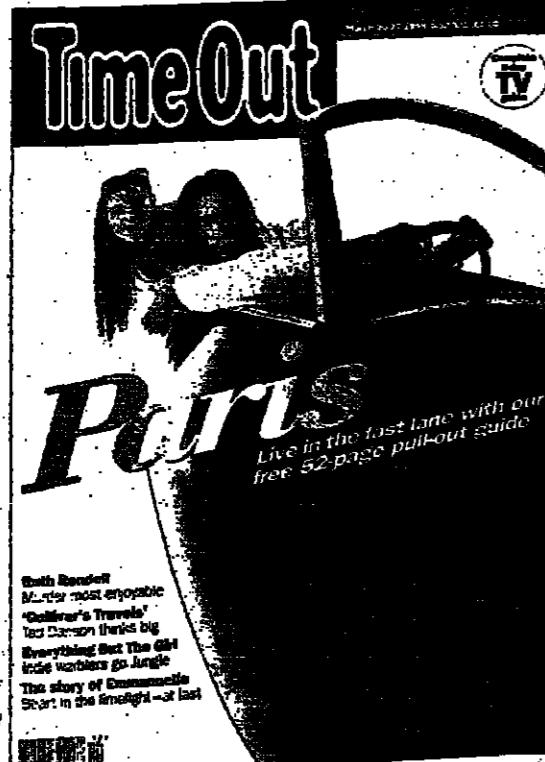
... and a cautionary tale

An early springtime weekend in Paris. What could be more delightful, especially taking advantage of an Air France bargain break with three-star hotel and flight included. But let the thirsty traveller beware! When you tire of strolling along the streets of the Marais or St Germain des Prés and drop into one of the many tempting cafés for a refreshing glass of wine or cup of coffee, prepare to dig deep into your wallet.

Our first stop was the famous Les Deux Magots in St Germain – a lovely café which Sartre and Picasso used to frequent. But at 30F (about £24) each for coffee and the equivalent of £10 for two glasses of wine we were taken aback. Still, perhaps it was the smart location. Surely a little stand-up coffee bar would be more reasonable... here the cost was £3 for a coffee, hot chocolate or cup of tea (or that ghastly weak, lukewarm equivalent) and a glass of water £2. These exorbitant prices met us wherever we went, turning a bargain into a potential overdraft break...

Elizabeth Murray

We don't just skirt around the périphérique



FREE 52-page Paris guide
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Out Tuesday

WHAT TO SEE

- 1 **Père Lachaise cemetery:** terrorist scares in Paris have impacted on this celebrity cemetery. Some gates are closed for security reasons, so the Métro station nearest an entrance is Gambetta rather than Père Lachaise itself. The main attraction is the lead singer of the Doors: Jim Morrison died in Paris in 1971, following a toxic cocktail of drugs. "Let's just say I was testing the bounds of reality" reads one scrawled testimony. Edith Piaf and Oscar Wilde are relegated to supporting acts, but a two-hour guided tour (Tuesday and Saturday, 2.30pm, 35F) puts the place in its proper, theatrical and tragic perspective. Open 8am-6pm.
- 2 **Jardins de Luxembourg:** a Left Bank oasis, populated by students from the Sorbonne, civil servants and serendipitous tourists.
- 3 **Galerie Lafayette:** head through the perfume counters, and Art Deco splendour, to the self-service restaurant atop this grand magasin – one of the best free views of the French capital.
- 4 **Notre Dame:** unless you insist on travelling to the top of this great Gothic cathedral, you can explore freely. The square outside is a terrific place to watch the weird touristic world go by.
- 5 **Centre Georges Pompidou:** Richard Rogers' and Renzo Piano's assault on Beaubourg still startles, even though half is under wraps and renovation. The centre, and its suspended elevator, opens from noon (10am at weekends) to 10pm – but stays closed on Tuesdays and on 1 May.
- 6 **Virgin Megastore:** the logo is familiar, but any resemblance between the Virgin Megastore in Paris and a British record shop ends at the front door. An over-enthusiastic staircase ushers you upwards to a chintzy salon purveying Piaf and Pink Floyd. Open 10am (Sundays: noon)-midnight.

FRENCH DEPARTURES

Competition across the Channel has forced fares down, but as with air tickets you can often save money by buying through a specialist agent rather than direct with the operator.

Researchers for the Independent set out to find the lowest fare from Dover or Folkestone to Boulogne or Calais for two adults and two children (aged over four years old) travelling with a Ford Escort, crossing mid-morning on Saturday 4 May and returning on the evening of Bank Holiday Monday 6 May. Driveline UK (01707 660011) offers a price of £75, including the annual subscription to its Travel Club, travelling on a 60-hour return on P&O from Dover to Calais – less than half the price charged by P&O direct.

Eurostar plans to start accepting bicycles for travel on trains to Paris and Brussels by the end of March. A charge of £25 return is likely to be made. Call 0800 186186 for more details.

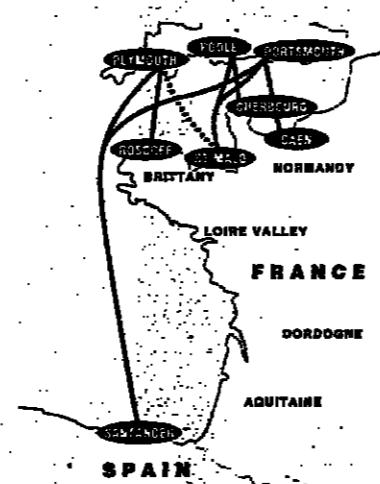
Whichever way you get yourself and your bicycle to France, there are plenty of opportunities when

you arrive. Rough Tracks (07000 560749) specialises in off-road cycling, including a two-week traverse of the Massif Central in France starting 26 June. For £775 you get flights between London and Lyon, accommodation in gîtes and all meals with free wine.

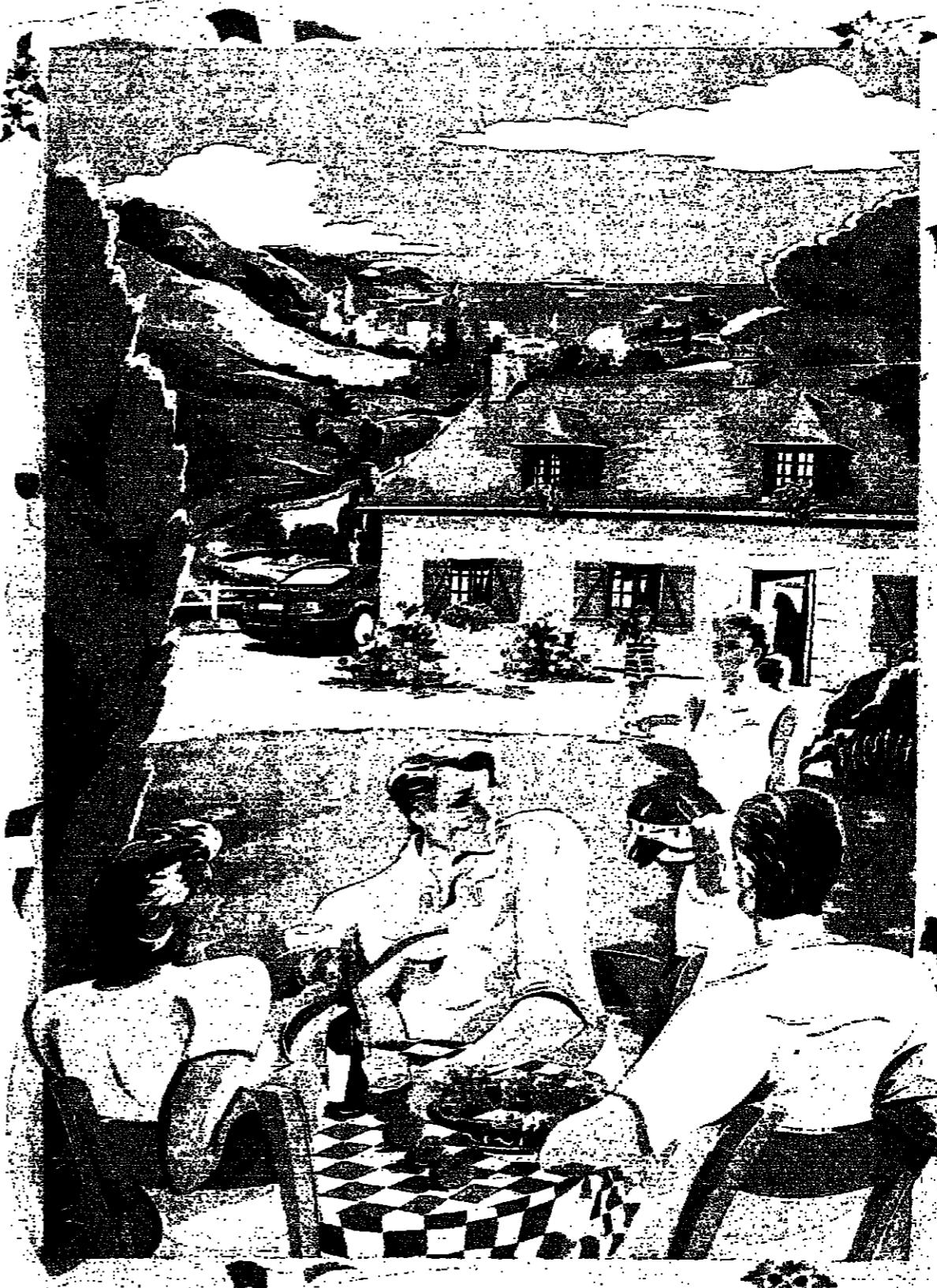
Bretton Bikes (a British-run company, based in France – tel 00 33 96 24 86 72) offers a selection of holidays from a week of cycle camping (£210) to a fortnight of hotel stays (£689). Prices include ferry crossings and bike hire.

Riding, fishing and golf are the activities on offer at La Gabelle, a 17th-century farm on the banks of the River Vienne near Chinon, in the Loire Valley of France. Riders can get lessons from instructors at the National Equestrian Centre nearby in Saumur, and visit the Museum of the Horse. Golfers may choose from five nearby courses, including one at Sept Tours where the clubhouse is a château. Anglers can try for roach, chub, carp, perch and lake bream. Call Vincent Hearne (01524 37676) for more details.

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3

Fat marmots whistled from the surrounding rocks

Tim Salmon takes a walk along the trans-Pyrenean footpath, the GR10

There are few towns in the Pyrenees, and Bagnères-de-Luchon with its genteel spa town elegance is the most attractive. We started here on a hiking holiday. For walkers who are not too ambitious and want to stay close to civilisation, it has several advantages. Lying just east of the centre of the range, it gives a taste of both the greener, wetter Atlantic influences and the hotter, drier Mediterranean ones.

The trans-Pyrenean footpath, the GR10, runs through it. There are several 3,000-metre summits in the vicinity, including the two highest summits, Aneto and Posets, just over the border in Spain.

There is a direct overnight train from Paris in the summer and one of the prettiest, simplest hotels in France, the Jardin des Cascades, just across the valley in the hamlet of Montauban.

We wanted to see the Lac d'Oô, the major local beauty spot. It is on the GR10, but you can dodge the first 1,000-metre climb out of town by driving up to Luchon's ski station at Superbagnères. Here, already, the world begins to look a different sort of place. Most of it is below you. At eye level there are only crags and steep pastures, all distant by a mile or more of air. We began to climb.

For the first couple of hours we made our way across grassy slopes. The afternoon was sunny and benign. On the Col de la Coume de Bourg we trudged our first patch of snow and a cold wind struck us. Suddenly, the sun was gone. Cloud settled in and it began to rain. We stopped to put on our waterproofs, but before we were done, hail was rattling on our hoods. Thunder rumbled. I tried to gauge how far away it might be. Should we stay where we were or could we make it over the next ridge?

In the event, the storm never materialised and, as we began the knee-trembling descent from the last ridge, the cloud gave way to a beautiful dappled evening. The Lac d'Oô lay at our feet, a perfect green disc, fed by 300 metres of waterfall. Banks of ground-hugging

How to get there

The closest airport to Bagnères-de-Luchon is Toulouse, about 90 miles to the northeast.

Air Liberté (0345 228899) has a fare of £105 return including tax.

From Toulouse, there are sporadic trains straight through to Luchon, but most journeys require a change en route to a bus.

Where to stay

The Jardin des Cascades in Montauban (00 33 61 79 83 09).

Who to ask

French Government Tourist Office, 178 Piccadilly, London W1V 0AL (0891 244123), a premium-rate number.

What to read

Tim Salmon is co-author of *Rough Guide to France* (£10.99).

rhododendron lined the path, interspersed with asphodels and blue geraniums, irises, orchids and lilies.

We were heading for the Espingo hut that overlooks its own small lake above the Lac d'Oô. Here we pitched our tent. In the mornings we performed our ablutions in the wild, cold stream where a herd of cows came down to drink, and watched the ibises, jumpy as antelopes, grazing under cover of the morning mist.

We climbed to the dull, grey waters of the Lac du Portillon 600 steep and rocky metres higher up. On the way down, in the warm afternoon sun, we saw fat marmots whistling from the rocks around their burrows.

Another day we went down to the Lac d'Oô by a path so steep it felt like a staircase – an unbelievably beautiful one.

Returning to Luchon in thick mist, we went straight to the Jardin des Cascades. After a dinner of melting cheese, noisette d'agneau, and fabulous desserts, we retired with delicious anticipation for our first night in a bed. Alas, the mayor

had given permission for a disco in the square below. At 2am, unable to endure another beat of the massive techno-pop, we took to the woods until dawn.

We gave ourselves a day to recover and crossed into Spain. The contrast was immediate. It is partly a matter of climate, for the whole of the Spanish side of the watershed faces south, but it is also much more remote, sparsely populated and old-fashioned.

It took about three hours to drive to Eriste in the valley of Benasque, the usual starting point for the ascent of Posets, where a passable but very rough track took us up the first five kilometres of the route to the Angel Orus refuge. And thereafter the climb was magnificent, at first high in the woods above the boiling, tumbling Eriste torrent and then beside it, in open pine forest where cows grazed in the flower-strewed clearings. A stiff zigzagging climb in the last sun brought us to the refuge, full of noisy Spaniards and sober Belgians from Bruges. We dined on lentils and slept in the open beneath a magical southern night full of stars and soft breezes.

We were on our way at first light, quickly reaching the narrow snow-filled gully that gives birth to the Lladrana stream. The snow was too hard to kick steps at this early hour and we were forced to scramble over the steep rock sides. An ibis hopped ahead of us with an enviable nonchalance, while two more watched us from the ridge above.

At the top, we emerged gasping in a region of red, shattered rock and blinding snow. And then, balancing along the summit ridge, glad there was no wind, we came to the broken concrete column that marks the top. There we picnicked and took each other's picture, proud to be the highest creatures between Glasgow and Granada – assuming the Sierra Nevada and neighbouring Aneto were unattended at that precise hour. In every direction, mountains receded into the distance. For Posets, set a little way south of the main range, provides the most amazing views.



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The Qatari desert: it is just after first light and Patrick Swayze is grinning madly at my bare white legs

By Jonny Beardsall

Shivering in my khaki shorts, it is just after first light and Patrick Swayze is grinning broadly. "You'll wanna get some sun screen on those," he says, looking at my bare white legs. I assure him that most English legs look like this in March. We are in the Qatari desert at the start of a horse race. I wonder what his legs will be like if he makes it to the end of the 26-mile leg-chaffing contest known as the Desert Marathon.

In an Islamic state where a *Dirty Dancing* video would merely raise puzzled looks, this famous name is just another equine tourist. In this land where the Arabian is still king, he, like me, is here for the Festival of the Horse. At the end of a week of shows, feasts and stud visits, the marathon is the gritty last act. And Swayze, a keen breeder, is about to ride in it.

Worth US\$100,000 in prize money, this wacky race lures entries from other Gulf states, the United States, Australia and Europe. With them comes an increasing trickle of first-time visitors to this former British Protectorate, an obscure sandy finger jutting from the western coast of the Gulf of Arabia.

The race begins at 8am at Ras Laffan, a bedouin encampment an hour's drive north from the coastal capital Doha. But with 12 hours of unseasonal rain falling the day before, conditions underfoot beggar belief. The rain has turned the almost straight course over the flat, featureless earth into treacle pudding.

Rain has also caused a serious hoo-ha in Doha and the streets with no drains have become canals. The traffic policeman roll up their trousers as the waves from the most bullish four-wheel drives swamp lesser vehicles. The taxi drivers give up and many businesses stay closed. But it is now Friday, the day of rest, and a sizeable chunk of Qatar's genial 400,000 population has made it to watch the race.

It is hot now. The backs of my calves turn pink as mid-morning temperatures nudge 85F. I see one Qatari jockey struggling to extract his pager, which is beeping from somewhere inside his headgear. It seems that everyone in Qatar has at least one pager, as well as a mobile phone. With no hands-free facility on a horse, riding alongside such technofiles looks very dicey. We push on and head for the finish.

Three hours later, long after the winner has been washed off, Swayze appears through the shimmering heat haze. "Hell, I got to do my dream. I rode an Arabian horse in the desert, I'm back next year for sure." He is the best stateside ambassador Qatar will ever find to push desert tourism.



Patrick Swayze – film star, horse breeder and desert racer – sets off on the Qatar International Desert Marathon

Photograph: Jonny Beardsall

the bar door is discreetly signed "library" and takes some finding. You also need a "library ticket" from reception to get in. There are no obligatory discos, amusement arcades or video shops. So far, it has shunned the worst the West might have to offer.

Yet with sand in spadefuls, the desert is what Qatar does best. And you can even try out a new sport here: sandboarding. A desert hybrid of it's snowy cousin, it

requires complete abandon. With few of the 40 metre high dunes sloping away at less than 45 degrees, beginners will find no nursery dunes. Just attach your booted feet to the board, point downhill, close your eyes and whoosh. Me, I think I'll stick to horses.

This year's Qatar International Desert Marathon takes place on 22 March – and Patrick Swayze will be riding again.

Snow report

"Great skiing at altitude, lower runs getting worn and icy" that just about sums up skiing conditions in most of the Alps this past week. In large parts of the Alps there has been no significant new snow for three weeks, and the strong March sun has begun to take the usual toll, particularly on lower and south-facing slopes. Also, during the last week the fairly low temperatures of early March have given way to slightly milder conditions. But there is still a good depth of snow on the upper slopes in most areas.

Austria had the benefit of light snowfalls early in the week, giving a short-lived boost to even the lowest resorts and producing superb conditions in higher resorts such as Lech and

Obergurgl. To the south, by contrast, the Italian Dolomites are in clear need of snow on the lower runs, particularly where there is no artificial cover. Switzerland and France have good skiing, attitude on offer practically everywhere, although some of the lowest resorts in the northern French Alps are again looking thin. The best skiing in Europe right now is to be had in the Pyrenees – particularly on the north-facing slopes of Baqueira-Beret, in Spain, and in Andorra – but with a low in the Mediterranean and weather fronts moving through the Alps, next week is anyone's guess. There are still bags of snow in north America, but milder temperatures have affected the western Canadian resorts a little.

Snow's up by Chris Gill

Grooming. That's the key to good skiing

What is the main ingredient in your recipe for a great day or week on skis? I'm just back from 10 days in Switzerland, in the course of which I skied in eight widely differing resorts in widely differing conditions. In February, I skied in seven rather less widely differing resorts in New England. Reflecting on these experiences, I'm in no doubt about my own answer: good snow.

However much importance you attach to scenic drama or village charm or slick lifts, my guess is that what really excites most skiers is the sublime sensation of making silky turns on soft snow, whether it's knee-deep in its natural state, plumped up into pillow moguls or packed to form a smooth surface. This is something that American resorts understand; it still seems to escape European resort managers.

In three weeks' time, people involved in ski resort management worldwide will be convening in Courchevel to reflect on how resorts have developed up to now and how they may develop in future. The delegates will be spending their mornings inspecting ski-resort hardware, including Kassbohrer piste-grooming machinery. They'll be spending their afternoons exploring the world's biggest linked ski area. And they'll be spending their evenings working through a long agenda designed to highlight and analyse the differences between ski resorts.

What amazes me is that the serious evening agenda – full of stuff about positioning resorts in the market and so on – appears to have no connection with what the delegates will be seeing in the morning – piste-grooming machines. The essential experience that a ski resort offers is skiing on prepared runs, but the quality of that experience is literally not on the agenda.

In most European resorts, piste grooming is something that is done after a snowfall to create a surface accessible to skiers who can't handle deep snow. In America, grooming is something that is done more or less nightly to maintain or recreate a good skiing surface in spite of the effects of sun, cold and the passage of skiers over the trails.

Last week, I skied in some resorts where the blue runs had clearly not been groomed for ages, with the result that any slope too steep to schuss consisted of gentle but hard bumps on which control took a lot of effort, especially for novice skiers. In the States, those slopes would have been restored

every night to a smooth, powdery surface.

I skied in other resorts where the runs had been groomed overnight, but incompletely: the snow had frozen after grooming, leaving a rock-hard surface that was nightmare to ski in the morning, before the sun had got to work. In the States, in my experience, this isn't allowed to happen. Whether the key is the timing or the techniques of grooming, I don't know, but the results are certainly better.

It's ironic that this convention should be taking place in Courchevel – one of the few resorts in Europe that approaches American standards of grooming. Delegates from America are likely to assume they're seeing a normal European ski area, while delegates from less customer-oriented Alpine resorts are unlikely to notice that they're not.

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The story that Peter Thayer of Durham wants to tell is "the first and longest terrestrial journey – retracing the migration route or early humans from East Africa to the southern regions of South America". You could fly in 12 hours, but Mr Thayer is going the hard way: following the Nile to the Mediterranean, around Turkey and along the Volga, across Siberia and the Bering Strait, through Alaska, Canada and the Great Plains of the US, through Central America and the infamous Darien Gap and then the odd few thousand miles to southern Chile: "Out of Africa to the Land of Fire".

After a trip like that, he will need a beer.

If you are aged between 18 and 35 you, too, can apply for a share of the £25,000 travel bursary being offered by Heineken Export, in association with The Independent. Forms are available from the special hotline number 0171-231 5432; the Lonely Planet Internet <http://www.lonelyplanet.com.au> or at STA travel shops. Applications must be received by 26 April. Winners will be announced on 6 May.

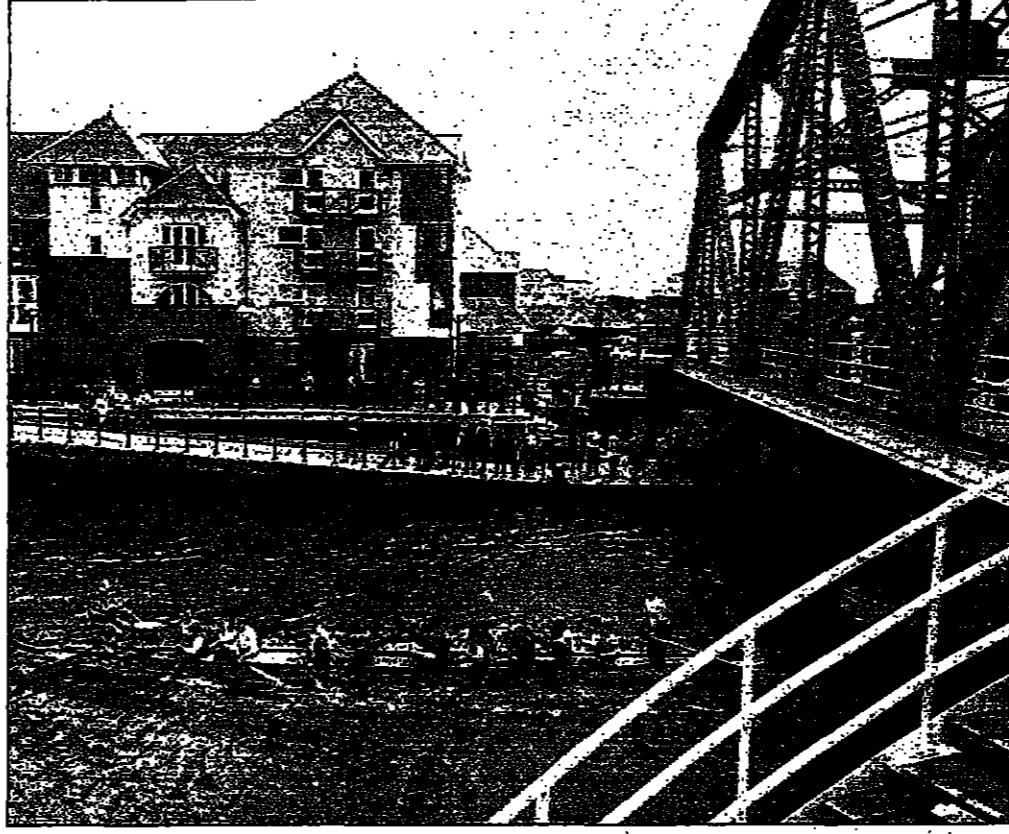
But if you are planning a trip that leaves before then, don't despair – we will be making interim awards. Which entries win will be entirely at the judges' discretion. One exceptional proposal (say, a tour of the 177 countries where Heineken Export is available) could win the full amount...

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Manchester: a city united by its past

Simon Calder visits the place named this week as Britain's top tourist town



Far left:
Manchester's
central
library and
theatre; left:
Dragon boat
racing on the
newly
developed
Salford
Quays

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Bernard Cribbins and the Queen are at odds. On Wednesday, he presided at the England for Excellence awards, and praised Manchester despite its roots in Oldham. Two years earlier, Her Majesty told students in St Petersburg that Manchester compared poorly with the former Russian capital.

Both cities, in fact, are chips off the same rebellious block. The roots of the 1917 revolt in Russia can be traced back to Manchester's own revolution. Since then St Petersburg has marched ahead in terms of touristic popularity, but this week's award may go some way to redress the balance.

Your preconceptions may take time to shake off. I have yet to find an approach to the city that does not involve passing through a desolate scattering of council flats resembling a giant, abandoned Legos project. The visitor is bound to encounter a fearsome stretch of urban motorway like the Mancunian Way, as elevated as its name, carving inelegantly through ungainly office blocks. Manchester shares more with Belgrade besides a failed bid to host the Olympics.

Demolition has been a theme ever since Manchester became the first get-rich-quick city in Britain, its development sparked by mechanisation of cotton production. Human fuel for the Industrial Revolution was shipped in like any other commodity. "Site of Little Ireland", reads a plaque on a street corner close to the Palace Theatre.

Large numbers of immigrant Irish workers lived here in appalling housing conditions. A visitor attraction that possibly helped the city win its award is a guided walking tour rejoicing in the title "Cholera in Manchester 1832".

One of the dark, satanic employers was Friedrich Engels, whose father despatched him from Germany to work in the family cotton factory in Manchester. His productivity was directed to studying *The Condition of the Working Classes in England*, which was published in 1848 and planted the seed for his collaboration with Karl Marx on *The Communist Manifesto* three years later. Royalty was not amused. Today, the PumpHouse People's History Museum reminds the world that it owes an ideology to Manchester, and ensures the city's radical

politics are not completely demolished in construction work for New Labour. Ideological tokens like the global headquarters of the Co-operative movement are dotted across the city. The tourist, however, will make for the Castlefield area. At the Museum of Science and Industry, relations between power (in both senses) and prosperity are examined with imagination on the site of the world's oldest railway station.

The former terminus of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway is now devoted to the story of the city. Celia Fennies, writing in *Through England on a Side-saddle* in 1897, reported: "Manchester looks exceeding well at the entrance. Very substantial buildings; the houses are not very lofty, but mostly of brick and stone." One hundred and fifty years later, much of the city was a slum. The Underground Manchester exhibit in the bowels of the museum tells you considerably more than you ever wanted to know about sewage and the poverty prevailing in Victorian England. Things improved when the Soap Tax was repealed in 1853, and gradually some humanity took hold; Little Ireland was demolished in 1877.

Innovation remained, and a century ago something like a hydraulic prototype of the Internet was devised: a city-wide underground pressure system. Compressed air was pumped around the city centre, operating machinery such as the safety curtain of the Opera House, the clock in the handsome Town Hall and the organ in the cathedral.

The Victorian value of high pressure has vanished into thin air, but the heroic viaducts have survived. These days, some of the graceful redbrick arches carry trams as they lop across the city. Old solutions are sometimes the best.

As industry declined, the only option was adopted: turn Manchester's empty spaces into a theme park. Castlefield

has become Britain's first Urban Heritage Park. Before resting your head at the new canalside Youth Hostel, take a drink at the Rover's Return - the Granada complex, home of Coronation Street, completes the touristic trick.

The BBC spends thousands on teaching trainees the basics of television, but all the Corporation need do is invest £12.99 a head in the hour-long tour of Granada's studios. Everything you ever wanted to know about TV, from early monochrome episodes of the Street to colour-separation overlay, is explained frame-by-frame in entertaining fashion.

For the facts that inspired the fiction of Coronation Street, you need only step 200 yards from the coach-hauled crowds

at the studios. To be alone in this city of 500,000, just go for a walk by the river.

Cross the Irwell and set out along the river on the Salford side. The view from here back across Manchester is a mélange of ruddy brickwork and blank high-rises, reflected in the sheen of oil obscuring the water. Trudging through the desolation, pocked by ancient wharves, you feel like the anti-hero in one of Morrissey's bleaker songs. Back in the heart of the city, Britain's biggest student population is packing out the cafés of Chinatown and the restaurants of "curry corridor" - while the tourists look curiously at their surroundings. Welcome to Manchester.



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UK DEPARTURES

Greenwich owes its

glory as the world's prime meridian, and its selection as site for the Millennium celebration, to the establishment of longitude by the Royal Observatory. A show called "The Discovery of Longitude", telling the story of the quest for the official Longitude Prize, is being staged at the Observatory as part of the year - the week of

Science, Engineering and Technology. There is some latitude about attending: the drama will be performed twice today and three times tomorrow, with the same pattern next weekend. Call 0181-858 4422 for details and times.

On Monday, plans are due to be unveiled for Segaworld at the Trocadero, "the world's largest futuristic indoor theme park". Until it opens, flight simulators remain the most effective form of "virtual travel". The Yorkshire Flight Centre (01423 340664) offers an hour on a Boeing 737 simulator for £180, including turbulence, instrument flying and an in-flight "emergency".

Northern Ireland enjoyed double-digit growth in tourism in 1995, reflecting a full year of the ceasefire. In an effort to limit the damage of the present upsurge in violence, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board has published its Holiday Breakaways brochure. It includes opportunities for fishing, flying lessons and a selection of hotels suited for the over-55s. Order the brochure on 01232 246609.

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including a swimming pool, a number of fine restaurants, a coffee shop, travel desk for local excursions and more. The guest rooms are all air-conditioned with full facilities including TV. Travellers never fail to be impressed.

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1996 Tuesdays - per person in a twin: April 2, £450.00 - April 9, £425.00 April 16, £413.00 - April 23, £385.00

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Price includes: return flight, 7 nights accommodation at the Meikles Hotel on a bed and breakfast basis. Not included: airport taxes, travel insurance, excursion programme (bookable locally), tipping. All prices are subject to change.

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A Special Announcement

A Week at Springtime in Southern Africa

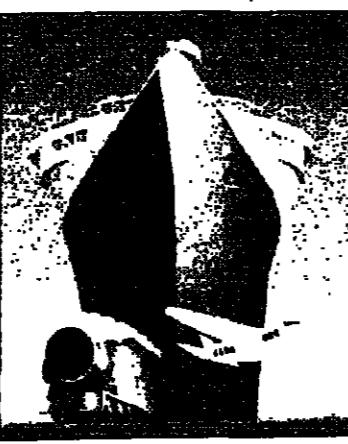
For four departures only we shall be operating a special flight to the lovely city of Harare (formerly Salisbury), with its fine museums housing the artefacts of David Livingstone. We have a small number of seats available on the first flight period allowing us to make a special offer of return flights in the famous and 5-star deluxe Meikles Hotel.

Besides visiting the main sights in and around Harare there are a host of excursion possibilities to the nearby game reserves and the highland areas such as Leopard's Rock. Excursions which are bookable locally, are also available to the well-known tourist areas of Hwange National Game Reserve, Victoria Falls and Lake Kariba. Alternatively you may wish to hire a car and explore the country independently.

This is an unique opportunity to visit southern Africa at a fraction of the normal tariff. The price includes return flights from London Gatwick to Harare, transfers and seven nights' accommodation on a bed and breakfast meal basis.

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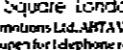
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Nobody who works in the financial markets, or writes about them professionally, can do so for long without recognising that their logic often seems to come straight out of Alice in Wonderland. In few other areas of everyday activity are we invited so regularly to believe that what seems "good" is in fact "bad", and vice versa. Not surprisingly, this tends to baffle ordinary investors, and reinforces the notion that there is some mystique about finance which it is not given to mere mortals to understand.

The most common example is the day when the markets fall sharply after taking fright at some piece of economic news which to any lay observer seems to be unalloyed good news, but which is nevertheless greeted by the markets as something close to Armageddon. The next day's headlines almost invariably refer to "market turmoil", or some such phrase, and record how billions of pounds have been "wiped off" share values by falling prices.

This phenomenon, which happens more often than you would have thought possible, happened again eight days ago. Anyone who read the financial pages last weekend might be forgiven for thinking that some climactic economic disaster had befallen the world, judging by the gloom in the



JONATHAN DAVIS
INVESTMENTS

headlines. The pretext was the fact that Wall Street had fallen quite sharply on Friday, a drop that was widely expected to be followed by sharp falls in London and other international markets this week. Meanwhile, the bond markets, which have been weakening since January, continued their run of

and what was the cause of this sudden attack of jitters, which prompted a "markets in turmoil" front page story in the *Financial Times*? None other than the release of the latest monthly employment statistics in the United States. These showed that "non-farm payrolls" – as the Americans call the figure they use to count those with a job – had jumped by 705,000 in a single month. In plain English, nearly three-quarters of a million people who did not have a job the month before now do have one.

If ever there was an example of

seemingly clear-cut good

economic news, this surely was it. If more people were being employed, then the economy must be doing better too. And yet the news sent Wall Street tumbling by over 150 points, and investors, so we were led to believe, into something approaching panic. In the event, stock markets all round the world have fallen this week, though not by as much as many originally feared.

Bond yields have also continued to rise, pulling up medium and long-term interest rates, and quite swamping the impact of Mr Clarke's latest trifling 0.25 per cent cut in short-term interest rates. No wonder those who follow the doings of the City and the markets from afar are bemused by these strange events. Even Sir Samuel Brittan, doyen of economic commentators, was moved in his column in the *Financial Times* this week to say that Karl Marx would have been proud of what had happened – since it

seemed to demonstrate that the markets only prosper when labour is in retreat.

How then to pick a path through these strange and paradoxical events? And what does it tell us about where the markets may be heading now? The answer, I think, is to hang on to the following simple propositions about how markets behave, all of which have been amply borne out by events of the last few days.

1. Markets do not like to be taken by surprise. The real problem with the US employment data was not the trend it showed, but the fact that the published number was much higher than most economists had been expecting. It forced them to re-examine their assumptions about what they thought is happening to the American economy.

2. In particular, the data (assuming it is confirmed by other statistics) suggests that the US economy is growing much faster than most people realised. Last year's worries about a "new recession" can be safely laid to rest. But growth is very much a two-edged sword for investors. What is good for company orders and profits may also be bad news in as far as it threatens to push up inflation and raise the cost of money.

3. Markets cannot live without worries of some sort. The new one is that interest rates, having fallen

sharply over the course of 1995, are unlikely now to fall much further, if indeed at all. The danger now is more of the economy growing so fast that it starts to generate new inflationary pressures. This may prompt the Federal Reserve to think about raising interest rates again (even though this is an election year when such increases are unusual).

4. No market is an island any more. In these days of growing interdependence, what happens in the US economy and in US financial markets quickly spills over into the UK and the rest of Europe. The long-term trend in interest rates for the last five years has been downwards. If the interest rate cycle in the United States is about to reverse, you can be certain that the same will eventually happen over here. But bear in mind, finally:

5. Markets are anything but omniscient. Today's crisis frequently turns out to be tomorrow's false alarm. Those investors who can ignore the daily dramas and concentrate on the long-term trends will always be the ones who fare best. On that score, the omens are nothing like as ominous as the headlines suggest. My reading of the historical trends is that we have still not reached the bottom of the down wave in long-term interest rates, though it cannot be all that far away.

Protection for investors with high anxiety

By Clifford German

Investors who are not satisfied with the prospect of low and falling interest rates on bank and building society accounts, but are concerned that share prices are closer to the top than the bottom of the current investment cycle might be attracted by the prospect of a unit trust which can be put into a Personal Equity Plan and combines the potential for stock market growth with a policy of locking in achieved gains and limiting the risk of loss.

The plan has been devised by Edinburgh Unit Trust Managers. It offers investors a protected price at which they can sell regardless of the actual performance of the units. Initially it is

set at 22.5p for the 35p units, but is recalculated every time the selling price of the units rises by 10 per cent, and is then held for a further year.

If the price of units has fallen at the end of each protected period the price can be reduced, but only by 5 per cent, and it is then held for another 12 months.

Investors can put in a lump sum of £1,000 or £30 a month into the unit trusts, or £1,500 or £100 a month into the PEP version. There is an initial charge of 3.5 per cent plus an annual management charge of 1.25 per cent and an exit charge of 1 per cent for investors who want out in the first 12 months, although

this waived for investors who buy during the launch period, from 20 March to 30 April.

It seems a good idea for investors anxious to lock in any gains but investors will have to monitor their investment to decide whether to sell before the end of a protected period if the market has been falling and the next protected price is set to be reduced.

Allenbridge, the London-based investment adviser, has ranked and rated 17 Enterprise Investment Schemes and Venture Capital Trusts currently on offer to investors looking for tax shelters ahead of the end of the financial year. They awarded

points for management expertise, approach to risk and investment strategy, and fees charged.

Pub Growth, investing in licensed premises, is rated best EIS scheme with a 65 per cent mark. Advent is rated the best VCT on offer with a score of 78 per cent and a "talent-packed investment team", just ahead of offerings from Augustus, Quester, Gartmore, Guinness Flight and Close Brothers. Hodgson Martin's VCT which will specialise in backing companies spun off from British universities, is rated only 60 per cent on the grounds that it is calling for a large fund which it might have difficulty investing.

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money peps

Inflation is still low. Is it time to head for corporate bonds?

Liam Robb offers a guide for investors looking to for a better performance

Over the past few years, while inflation has been low, bonds have actually given a higher return than equities and the Chancellor's decision last summer to allow corporate bonds to be repaid was seen by the investment industry as godsend.

There are two types of corporate bond PEPs. The vast majority - there are currently about 50 - are pooled unit trusts which invest in a range of fixed-interest securities with varying redemption dates. The problem is that as bond prices go up, their yields drift down and income flows and redemption prices from pooled vehicles can only be predicted - not guaranteed.

One alternative is Sun Alliance, which has recently launched the Daisy PEP. For a 5 per cent initial charge, the manager will guarantee repayment of capital if the fund is held for six years.

However, an increasing number of single corporate bond PEPs are arriving on the market. These offer the opportunity to invest in a single fixed-interest stock with a known redemption

date and price (providing the bond is held until maturity) and a known yield which will be paid irrespective of prevailing interest rates.

General Accident, for example, has packaged National Grid debt in a corporate bond growth PEP which pays no dividend but promises a tax free return on the original investment plus 50 per cent growth at August 2000 (offer closes 26th March). Some companies have marketed their own debt - Legal & General was the most successful, raising £130m in a guaranteed bond plan which offered 7.0 per cent fixed 5.5 years or 45 per cent growth. This issue is now closed although further issues are being considered.

Corporate bonds offered by building societies or banks are not eligible for inclusion in PEPs. However, Johnson Fry has packaged various building society securities within its Chip 5 fund offering a guarantee of capital repayment after five years. The yield is 6.3 per cent (equivalent annual return for basic rate tax payers of 7.88 per cent). The offer closes 18 March.

However, seduced by low interest rates at the bank, most companies are not particularly hungry for debt at the moment and the administrative difficulties of marketing their own debt within a PEP scheme ensures that such vehicles are rare.

It is possible for private investors to pick their own corporate bond and transfer it to a self-select PEP scheme. There is no shortage of choice with Eurosterling bonds available from most of the large quoted companies like Tesco, ICI or PowerGen. However, it is not necessarily possible for a broker to buy the bond in exactly the denominations a client needs. In addition, many domestic UK bonds do not have credit ratings so it can be difficult for private investors to assess the risk they are taking on.

Hargreaves Lansdown Asset Management has overcome some of the problems by buying single corporate bonds in bulk - normally those which are trading at or under par - and then packaging them in denominations which suit potential PEP buyers. There are savings to be

made because of the economies of scale and the bonds on offer from week to week.

The company is currently promoting two: Eastern Electricity, which has a very long 30-year redemption date but which nonetheless offers an impressive gross redemption yield of 9.4 per cent, and Glaxo, which yields 8.7 per cent. The yields are guaranteed and are considerably higher than most of the pooled unit trusts. Perpetual's PEP bond fund, for example, which was voted top investment product for 1995 by independent financial advisers, is currently yielding 7.3 per cent.

Many management companies believed that the natural market for corporate bond PEPs would be those who were in, or nearing, retirement. In fact, as Peter Hargreaves, chairman of Hargreaves Lansdown has discovered, the products are attracting investors of all ages. However, as Amanda Crowley of Allenbridge Group explained, a high yield should not be the only consideration. "The yields on single corporate bonds and the capital repayment at the end of the term are only guaranteed while the company is still in business," she said. "The reason they are yielding more is simply because they are much riskier vehicles."

Graham Hooper of independent financial advisers Chase de Vere also urged caution. "We would want to look at each issue on its merits and certainly wouldn't advocate investors going into single corporate bonds for the sole reason that they are yielding more," he said. "The collapse of Barings has shown that having all your eggs in one basket is not necessarily a good idea. For the less risk-averse investor however, certain single corporate bonds may well be worth considering."

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Hargreaves Lansdown
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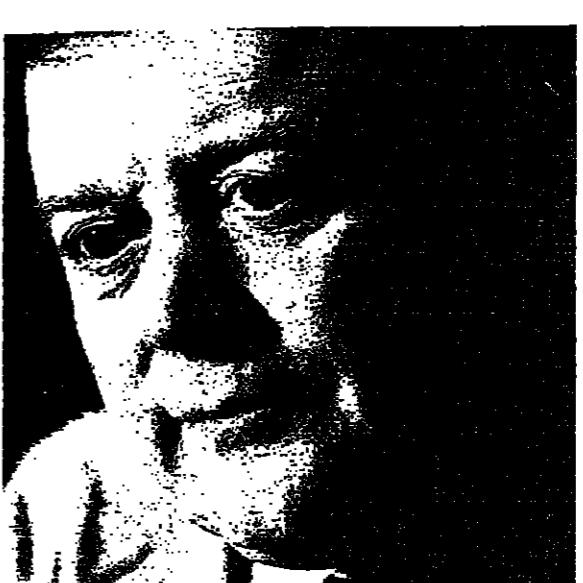
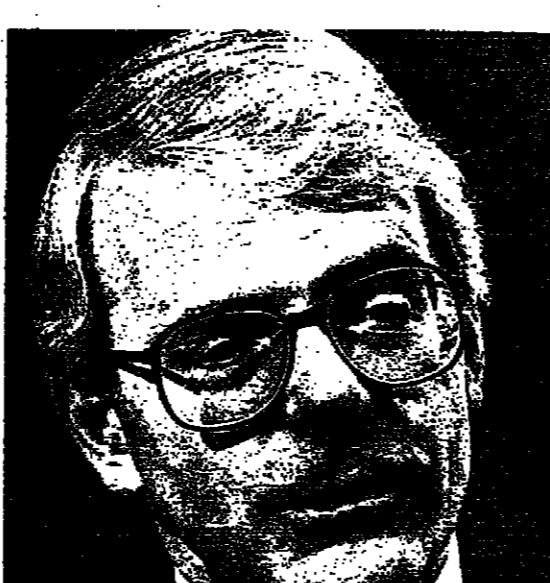


E W



Are you getting your share?

PEPs are still the most advantageous way for big and small investors to buy equities. Clifford German looks at what's on offer



PEPs have outlasted four Chancellors so far: Nigel Lawson, John Major, Norman Lamont and the current incumbent, Kenneth Clarke

It really does make sense for small investors who want to buy and hold shares (and not just stag new issues) to invest through a Personal Equity Plan. Dividends on shares held in a PEP are not liable to income tax, and any gains made on disposal are exempt from capital gains tax. PEPs make sense for small investors and they make even more sense for big investors who are otherwise liable to higher rate tax on share dividends and who regularly expect to make capital gains in excess of their annual tax-free allowance.

PEP holders do not even need to declare the income or the gains on their tax forms. And unlike Tessa's (Tax-Exempt Savings Accounts), which lose their tax-free status if the capital is withdrawn in the five-year life of the account, PEPs can be cashed at any time without losing the tax advantages they have already earned.

PEPs have been around since 1987, and anyone who bought the maximum amount allowed each year could have invested £64,000 and with average luck should now be sitting on a tax-free portfolio worth at least £100,000 and perhaps £30,000 worth of tax-free dividends.

The annual investment limits have increased over the years – and the choice of investments has widened – so that anyone over 18 can now put up to £6,000 during the tax year ending 5 April into a PEP which invests in a spread of shares, plus a further £3,000 each year can be invested in the shares of a single company.

Since last July investors have been able to choose between a PEP invested in shares and a corporate bond PEP

which invests in fixed-interest loan stocks issued by UK companies and the UK government gilts.

You do not have to invest the maximum sum to get a PEP; you can usually invest as little as £500 as a lump sum, or put from £20 a month into a regular savings PEP. You can buy a PEP off the page from an advertisement, you can buy one through a retail stockbroker, or get an independent financial adviser (IFA) to buy one for you. If you are in any doubt about where to start, both the Association of Unit Trusts (Aut) and the Association of Investment Trust Companies (Aitc) will be happy to send you a free fact sheet and a list of providers.

In practice, most PEPs are invested in a unit trust or an investment trust, which gives you a spread of investments, and you can monitor their performance from the prices listed in the main financial papers. You can choose a PEP which is intended to maximise dividend income; usually one with the words high income or extra income in its title; or you can choose one which is designed to produce capital gains, or one which tries to secure a happy medium; you can choose distribution PEPs which pay out the tax-free income or accumulation PEPs which reinvest the dividends.

These days you can also choose income shares in certain "split-level" investment trusts, which entitle you to the bulk of the dividends on the assets, while someone else gets the capital appreciation. Or you can choose tracker funds which select their investments to follow, almost exactly, the performance of a specific stock market index, usually the FTSE 100 share index or the All-Share index. There are also

a few "guaranteed" PEPs, like the Legal & General corporate bond, which deliver a fixed yield, and others which look in capital gains.

Including corporate bond PEPs, there are now more than 2,000 different PEP plans you can choose from, almost as many as there are companies whose shares are listed on the stock market. But you can also use a self-select PEP as a way of investing directly in the stock market while still benefiting from the tax advantages of a PEP. You instruct a stockbroker which shares to buy and sell, and when to do so – but the shares are held in your PEP. More and more stockbrokers offer this service – and the cut-price share-dealing services will do it at their standard fee or less.

Which kind of PEP you choose depends on whether you want to maximise income or chase capital gains, or a combination of both. But you should remember that tax-free dividend income from a PEP benefits virtually all investors, while most investors are already exempt in practice from capital gains because they do not realise £6,000 of gains anyway, and only the top 10 per cent or so will benefit from exemption. For most small investors therefore it makes sense to go for income from a PEP and go for gains outside the limits of a PEP plan.

It is estimated that around 14 per cent of the adult population now has a PEP, compared with the 16 per cent who have a Tessa. But while most investors are limited to a total holding of £9,000, PEP investors can invest up to £9,000 every year.

PEPs must invest directly in ordinary, preference or convertible preference shares in companies based in the UK, or the European Union provided they are listed on a recognised stock market, or in corporate bonds or convertible loan stock of UK companies which are priced in sterling, pay fixed rates of interest and have at least five years left before they mature.

That includes Eurosterling bonds issued by UK companies offshore, but excludes bonds issued by companies in the financial sector such as banks. But PEPs can be invested in unit trusts or investment trusts which invest at least half their funds in qualifying assets.

As a further dispensation investors can get some exposure to the US, Japan or emerging markets by putting up to £1,000 out of their £6,000 allowance into unit trusts or investment trusts which do not qualify – provided that any further investment in the same year is managed by the same provider.

You can only buy one PEP (or one equity PEP plus one bond PEP) each year, but you can buy from a different provider each year, and you can transfer your PEPs to another manager each year. But you cannot simply set up your own PEP. You have to go to a bank, building society, stockbroker or one of the new providers such as Virgin or Marks & Spencer.

Investors must remember that PEPs, like shares, can fall as well as rise, and providers can deduct initial charges, exit charges and annual management charges, which have to be set against your tax-free advantages, but even these are falling as a result of competition.

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What's inside the tax-free wrapper?

By Liam Robb

The great bulk of money placed in PEPs is actually invested in new or existing unit or investment trusts which are assigned to a PEP "wrapper". So the most frequent choice a PEP investor needs to make is between a unit trust and an investment trust to invest in.

The fundamental difference between the two vehicles is that investment trusts are closed ended and unit trusts open ended. At the beginning of an investment trust's life, the manager will have a specific amount of money to invest and the value of the entire fund - which is listed on the Stock Exchange like any other share - will fluctuate with market sentiment.

If the market believes the future is bright, the trust may trade at a premium to the actual net asset value (NAV) of the fund's underlying investments. At other times it may trade at a discount - a frustrating quirk which can result in the value of the shares falling despite the fund manager having performed well.

Unit trusts, on the other hand, issue units to buyers rather than shares. The fund is not listed on the Stock Exchange and if there are more buyers than sellers then the fund manager will have to invest that additional money. Conversely, if investors are not sellers of the fund, the manager will have to liquidate some of the investments in order to pay them back. The size of the fund will therefore expand and contract and the price of the units is adjusted each day to reflect the net asset value of the underlying portfolio; investors know they are buying at "fair value" and for this reason many people feel more comfortable with unit trusts.

"Asking whether you should be in investment trusts or unit trusts is the wrong question." Independent financial adviser Chase de Vere has undertaken research which shows that, because of the gearing effect, investment trusts will, to varying degrees, outperform unit trusts in bull runs but will underperform when markets are depressed. However, since most markets tend over the long term to be bull markets (the FTSE 100, for example, now stands at around double what it was 10 years ago, despite the devastating crash of September 1987), surely this would imply that

said Jason Hollands, director of PEP analysis, Best Investment. "The real question is: which sector should you be in and which is the best fund within that sector?"

Most investors plump for unit trusts, although this is partly as a result of strong marketing by unit trust managers. Inevitably, these costs will impact on the initial management fee - 5 per cent is typical - and investors may ask whether they wish to pay for this - particularly as most investment and unit trust managers have underperformed the FTSE All-Share over the past five years.

A perception persists that investment trusts are the reserve of more sophisticated investors. They tend to be more specialist and to some extent more risky vehicles since there are virtually no restrictions on what shares or securities an investment trust portfolio can hold; unit trusts are obliged to hold a minimum of 90 per cent of their portfolio in securities listed on recognised stock exchanges.

A more important legal difference between the two vehicles is that, unlike unit trusts, investment trusts are permitted to "gear" - borrow additional funds to purchase investments. Gearing, as the name suggests, has the effect of exaggerating the returns of the fund.

Independent financial adviser Chase de Vere has undertaken research which shows that, because of the gearing effect, investment trusts will, to varying degrees, outperform unit trusts in bull runs but will underperform when markets are depressed. However, since most markets tend over the long term to be bull markets (the FTSE 100, for example, now stands at around double what it was 10 years ago, despite the devastating crash of September 1987), surely this would imply that



What's in the wrapper? The usual choice for investors is between a unit trust and investment trust

investment trusts offer better value?

Investment trust performance statistics are always based on the mid-price. With offer-to-offer calculations, unit trusts' initial and annual management fees are ignored. On an offer-to-bid basis they are included and their performance suddenly looks far less impressive.

Most advisers favour investment trusts above unit trusts under two circumstances: when they are trading at what seems to be an unnecessarily high discount to NAV and when markets are volatile.

Investors tend to move in herds and will buy or sell particular stocks or sectors en

masse. Although some of the fund can be kept in cash, in a volatile environment unit trust managers are forced to buy near the top of the market and sell near the bottom - a complete contradiction to investment theory which could adversely affect the overall performance of the fund.

A reputable hybrid offering the best of both vehicles would seem to be the answer and that answer should arrive this July in the form of Open Ended Investment Companies (Oeics - pronounced "oh-iks" to the industry's dismay).

Like unit trusts, Oeics will be valued according to the underlying assets but investors will be

issued with shares rather than units.

Another important difference is that Oeics will have a single price for both buyers and sellers rather than a bid-offer spread, which should make the job of comparing competing funds considerably easier. Expect increasing piles of Oeic promotional literature to land on your doormat as summer approaches.

Association of Unit Trusts and Investment Funds (AUTIF) 0171-531 0898

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How investors can have their income cake and eat it

By Chris Whittingslow

Falling interest rates are putting the squeeze on investors who rely on savings, threatening them with a choice of selling assets or reducing living standards. But there is an alternative. It is to buy "income shares" issued by a certain kind of investment trust known as a "split level trust". These shares take the lion's share of all dividends from the investment trust. Dividends are still on an upward trend, unlike interest rates. So they can provide a very high income - typically around 11 per cent at the moment.

They can give you just as much income as an annuity, without involving the sacrifice of all your capital. They enable you to have your income cake and eat it too. And, as dividend income grows, you still have the possibility of seeing your income grow too. You won't get the sort of capital growth an equity income fund tends to produce, but you should retain a decent sum to hand on to your family.

And if you change your mind there is nothing to stop you selling your income shares and either investing in something else or simply spending some of the money.

In recent years the emergence of unit trusts investing entirely or mainly in a portfolio of income shares has transformed income shares from being the preserve of wealthy individuals and financial institutions into an investment which the average person can now consider. Unit trusts based on income shares can also be held in a Personal Equity Plan, which adds tax advantages to the attractions of a high income.

If you invested your full PEP allowance of £6,000 in an income share fund which yielded 10 per cent a year for 10 years you could hope to have net income over that period of £600 a year, or £6,000

in all. On this the cumulative tax saving, on current rates of income tax, would be between £1,200 and £2,400. You would certainly be getting full value out of the PEP's freedom from income tax.

Chris Whittingslow is investment director of Exeter Fund Managers (01392 412144)

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THE WEEK AHEAD

Television

By Robert Gilbert

Radio

By Robert Hanks

MONDAY
This Life 9.45pm BBC2. (above) twentysome things, that generation sandwiched between baby-boomers and 'youth', get a shout in this new continuing drama (don't mind 'soap') about a group of London-based friends without the laughs, to put it crudely, but not told (780370). Film: Honeymoon to Vegas (Andrew Bergman 1992 US) 10pm C4. Highly entertaining comedy with newly married Sarah Jessica Parker finding herself torn between hubbie Nicolas Cage and sly gambler James Caan (244032).

TUESDAY
The Monday Play: Five Kinds of Silence 7.45pm red. Tony Courtney plays an insanely dyslexic and abusive father in a disquieting drama by Shalagh Stephenson, based on true events. Also stars Sue Johnston, Julia Ford and Lesley Sharp.

WEDNESDAY
Without Walls 9pm C4. Janet Street-Porter says 'I accuse the Internet of being a cultural sponge for sad anecdotes. If that is the case, then surely she should be saying, "Yours" (1980). And the Bill 8pm C4. (above) Phil Redmond's last entry into period drama - the period being Liverpool in the early Sixties. Stars Jenny Agutter and former Brookside's Tony Maudsley. Big Mouth 11.05pm C4. It's that Tony Parsons again, in a new cultural chat show with the emphasis on the opinionated (884567).

THURSDAY
Night Waves 10.45pm R3. Tony Palmer explores the myth of Dr Livingstone and other heroes of Empire, while Christopher Hope talks about his new novel, *Darkest England*, in which an African encounters the primitive peoples of modern Britain.

FRIDAY
Modern Times 9pm BBC2. (above) A cautionary tale for anyone who's seen *Trainspotting* and fancied getting it together with a heroin addict. It ended with being chased in pain and set alight for Tracy, when thus came looking for her private boyfriend and found her instead (481315). A Man's World 9.50pm BBC2. The rule-bound world of courting in the first half of this century, when a man knew a woman was for him when she refused to have sex before marriage (265043).

Reputations 9pm BBC2. (above) Joy Adamson, early conservationist and author of *Born Free*, remembered more for her nickname the "Venezuela alley-cat" than for raising Elsa the lioness. This husband George claimed it was separate beds all the way (7280).

Undercover Britain 9pm C4. A roader blows the lid off the *Aut Wiederehren*. Pet image of British construction workers in Germany. Far from being a lark with the lads, it's often dangerous, illegal and corrupt (1957).

THE RUTH RENDELL MYSTERIES 9pm ITV. (above) A new one - with cuddly Keith Barron as the copper on the trail of a (yawn) serial killer (7855). Film: *The Sting* (George Roy Hill 1973 US) 11.05pm BBC1. Newman and Redford reunited for a betting scam and some fancy Scott Joplin Ingework (29390990).

Undercover Britain 9pm C4. A roader blows the lid off the *Aut Wiederehren*. Pet image of British construction workers in Germany. Far from being a lark with the lads, it's often dangerous, illegal and corrupt (1957).

Letter from America 9.15pm R4. It's now been going without a break for 50 years. Alastair Cooke marks the anniversary with a new version of his first ever letter, on the subject of GI brides, and some observations on what has changed over half a century.

Sunday television and radio

BBC1

7.30 Jim Henson's Animal Show (S) (4228359). 7.55 Playday (R) (S) (1772-73). 8.15 This Multi-media Business (6941678). 8.30 Breakfast with Frost (67123). 9.30 Sense of Change (5932494). 10.15 See Heart (S) (932455). 10.45 The French Experience (3317185). 11.00 Hidden Empire (R) (S) (185). * 11.30 My Brilliant Career. John Spies, campaigning Chairman of Brighton NHS Trust (R) (S) (2814). * 12.00 Countryfile (S) (92475). * 12.30 On the Record (562111). * 1.30 EastEnders Omnibus (S) (5173663). * 2.55 The True Grit (Henry Hathaway 1969 US). John Wayne finally wins his Oscar by sending himself up in this surprisingly violent western in which his drink-hardened one-eyed US marshall is persuaded by a 14-year-old girl to track down her father's killers. With Glen Campbell, Kim Darby (as the girl) and Robert Duvall (73730036). * 5.00 The Pink Panther Show (1648630). 5.20 The Clothes Show (S) (1285456). * 5.45 News, Weather (510285). * 6.05 Local News (299253). 6.10 Songs of Praise (S) (569340). * 6.45 Antiques Roadshow. Henley-on-Thames throws up a Venetian old master (S) (817659). * 7.30 Ballykissangel. Last part of the English-priest-in-Ireland comedy drama (S) (138146). * 8.20 The Scent of a Woman (Martin Brest 1992 US). BBC1's second Oscar-winning performance of the day belongs to Al Pacino as the blind army colonel planning one last speech before ending it all. Chris O'Donnell is the shy college boy assigned to look after him for the weekend. Both lives - needless to say - are changed forever (concluded after the : News) (4836659). * 9.45 News, Weather (957291). * 10.00 The Scent of a Woman (S) (2307). * 11.00 Heart of the Matter. Divorce, British-style. Joan Bakewell investigates (S) (957307). * 11.40 The Duellists (Ridley Scott 1977 UK). Scott's first film is a stunningly photographed, coolly impersonated adaptation of Joseph Conrad's Napoleonic-era story *The Duel*, and stars Keith Carradine and Harvey Keitel as two French hussars fighting out their own private war, through a series of duels, against the backdrop of the wider conflict (913746). * 1.20 Weather (864993). To 1.25am. **REGIONS**. Wales: 11.00pm Wales Playhouse. 11.30 Heart of the Matter. 12.10 Film: The Duellists. 1.50 News. NI: 2.25pm Now You're Talking 3.20 Up to the Port. 3.50 Film: Wings of the Apache 5.10 Our Roving Reporter.

BBC2

6.15 Open University: Pure Maths: Multiplying Matrices (9690659). 6.40 Maths Models (6893185). 7.05 Developing World (526255-3). 7.30 Biology: Form and Function (4215611). 7.55 Christopher Plantin, Polyglot Printer of Antwerp (1761369). 8.20 Animal Behaviour (4556727). 8.45 Making Readers for Life (6014746). 9.10 Children's BBC: JACK AND JILL. 9.25 Phantom 2040 (6847104). 10.45 The All New Popeye Show (2146111). 10.50 The Never Design Awards (4514562). 10.50 Grange Hill (901852). 10.55 The Art and Design Show (9690730). 11.20 Short Change (6099185). 11.45 Star Trek (R) (5932901). 12.35 Police Squad. Police spoof (7965611). 1.00 Singled Out (82230185). 1.20 Holiday Outings (54160630). 1.30 Regional Programmes (27659). 2.00 **Judgment at Nuremberg** (Stanley Kramer 1961 US). An all-star concentration-camp drama, with special guest-visitor appearances, was how Gavin Lambert wickedly summed up: Kramer's drama about the trial of the Nazi judges who enforced Hitler's laws. Spencer Tracy presides over Burt Lancaster, Richard Widmark, Marlene Dietrich and Judy Garland (72937475). 4.55 Rugby Special (S) (9577123). 5.55 The Natural World. The colourful Bowerbird in action (S) (5226359). 6.45 Crafts 6.50 Best in Show. The announcement of Best in Show, and the Working, Terrier and Hound groups. **Cut** viewing (S) (2232678). 8.00 Clive Anderson Is Our Man... Beatin. See Preview, p32 (S) (298914). * 8.40 The Money Programme. The concern in universities that pure scientific research has been sacrificed for the needs of industry (629562). 9.20 Horizon, 1/2. See Preview, P32 (S) (102562). * 10.10 Cricket World Cup. Highlights from the Australian Sri Lanka final in Lahore (5182104). 11.10 **THE CAT CHASER** (Abel Ferrara 1989 US). Witty, underlined Elmore Leonard adaptation, co-written by Elmore, stars Peter Weller as a Miami-based ex-marine who asks for trouble by dating the wife of the secret police in the Dominican Republic. Kelly McGillis (Followed by Weatherview) (S) (706017). * 12.40 **ACT OF VIOLENCE** (Fred Zinnemann 1949 US). Film noir about crippled WWII camp survivor Van Hell hunting down the ex-inmate who betrayed him and his comrades during a prison break-out (8182895). To 2.00am. **REGIONS**. Wales: 3.30pm Welsh Lobby. 4.55 Scrum 5.10 Our Roving Reporter.

ITV/London

6.00 **MTV**. 6.00 The Sunday Review. 6.30 News and Sport. 7.30 The Sunday Programme (63645). 8.00 **Disney Club**. Let Loose in rehearsal, and Jenny Powell watches some Olympic swimmers hopefuls in action (S) (08059104). * 10.15 **Link** (S) (3807122). * 10.30 **A Meditation**. In the footsteps of St Francis of Assisi (952532). * 11.30 **Blessed Are They** (S) (5330611). * 11.55 **Chalkie Talk**. With TV viceroy Steve Chalke (S) (7747017). 12.30 **Crossstalk** (15814). 1.00 **News, Weather** (48567630). * 1.10 **Jonathan Dimbleby**. Foreign Secretary. Margaret Ridsdorf quizzed (57733651). 2.00 **Big Jack - the Glory Years**. Another excuse for football. Ireland's World Cup match with Italy remembered (P1 60263). 2.30 **The Sunday Match**. Birmingham City vs Sunderland - and Endersleigh League stars of importance to the City area (S) (52931569). 5.10 **Murder, She Wrote**. Jessica visits Ireland. There goes the peace process (S) (5450273). 6.05 **London Tonight** (781859). 6.20 **News, Weather** (762524). * 6.35 **You've Been Framed** (S) (574456). * 7.05 **Superman IV: The Quest for Peace** (S) (1987). Christopher Reeve and the arms race in this tatty-looking third sequel that somehow (money?) tempted Gene Hackman and Margot Kidder back down Metropolis way (S) (48918272). * 8.45 **News, Weather** (47469-19). * 9.00 **Band of Gold**. Carol is arrested on suspicion of murder (S) (43828). * 10.00 **Cracker**. 1/3. The beginning of another re-run story. "The Big Crunch" finds Fiz investigating the disappearance of a teenage girl (R) (S) (7475). * 11.00 **THE FIELD** (Jim Sheridan 1990 UK). Sheridan's follow-up to *My Left Foot* was almost bound to disappoint. Richard Harris gives one of his force-of-nature turns as Irishman "Bull" McCabe, a shaggy old dog who has toiled for years to turn a rock-strewn wasteland into the most fertile patch around. Enter Tom Benger, the Yank who wants to buy it. With John Hurt, Sean Bean and Brenda Fricker (P1 757225). 1.05 **Cue the Music**. The Commitments (4763944). 2.10 **THE ACCIDENTAL TOURIST** (Lawrence Kasdan 1988 US). Emotionally repressed travel writer John Hurt finds will to live again thanks to kooky dog trainer Geena Davis (74078437). 4.25 **Night Shift** (46746523). 4.35 **Shift** (6436692). To 5.30am.

Channel 4

6.25 **Trans World Sport** (R) (7258951). 7.20 **Take 5**. With **The Magic Roundabout**, *Bush Tails*, *Natalie, the Engine* and *Joggy Bear* (S) (5632104). 7.45 **The Magic School Bus** (16933). 8.15 **Hong Kong Phooey** (6934388). 8.30 **Stunt Dawgs** (5101559). 8.55 **Biker Mice from Mars** (R) (6023194). 9.20 **The Secret World of Alex Mack** (S) (2247185). 9.50 **Earthworm Jim** (S) (5222072). 10.15 **Saved by the Bell: The New Class** (1527185). * 10.40 **Way Up** (S) (5920369). 11.15 **NRAB** (R). The Phoenix Suns take on the Detroit Pistons (467920). * 12.15 **Mission Impossible** (721630). * 1.15 **Board Stupid**. Gabriella and Mica Paris join the snowboarders (S) (22267982). 1.45 **THE TAI MEN**. (1955) Western with Clark Gable. 4.00 **Blue Wilderness**. Underwater film-makers Ron and Valerie Taylor and a lot of sharks (920). * 4.30 **A French Affair**. Beginning a re-run of this two-part study from Malcolm Brinkworth and team, who brought us the recent *Island of Dreams* of British people who have moved to France hoping to turn their Dordogne holiday into a way of life (R) (S) (51562). * 5.30 **Holyoaks**. Lucy's 18th (R) (S) (4561). * 6.00 **Bill and Ted's Bogus Journey** (Peter Hewitt 1991 US). Before Wayne's World there was Bill and Ted, grungey American teenage duds with their own vocabulary (for a year or so there). "bodacious" was the ultimate accolade). Keanu Reeves and Alex Winter are kidnapped by Joss Asch's evil-doer and replaced by replicants. Good fun (S) (62085265). * 7.45 **Travelogs**. Pete McCarthy in the Australian Outback (S) (661901). 8.00 **Encounters - Twits**. See Preview, p32 (S) (5194). 9.00 **Bad Behaviour** (Les Blair 1992 UK). See *The Big Picture*, p32 (S) (5253). * 11.00 **DECEMBER BRIDE** (Thaddeus O'Sullivan 1989 UK). The landscape of coastal Northern Ireland is beautifully captured in O'Sullivan's sombre piece that sees Saska Reeves's turn-of-the-century maid having an affair with the two brothers who employ her (3246775). 12.35 **Your Face**. Animation (R) (7477215). 12.40 **LA VIE EST UN LONG FLEUVE TRANQUILLE** (Etienne Chatiliez 1988 Fr). Satire on the provincial French class system which has a middle-class couple discovering that a vengeful nurse exchanged their newborn son with the daughter of an impoverished, near-criminal family 12 years previously (183437). To 2.15am.

ITV/Regions

ANGlia As London except 12.00pm *Countryfile* (62351). 5.30 **Live** (6201292). 5.30 **Coronation Street** (62123). 11.00 **Home Affairs** (52747). 11.30 **EastEnders** (52748). 1.20 **EastEnders** (52749). 2.00 **EastEnders** (52750). 2.30 **EastEnders** (52751). 3.00 **EastEnders** (52752). 3.30 **EastEnders** (52753). 4.00 **EastEnders** (52754). 4.30 **EastEnders** (52755). 5.00 **EastEnders** (52756). 5.30 **EastEnders** (52757). 6.00 **EastEnders** (52758). 6.30 **EastEnders** (52759). 7.00 **EastEnders** (52760). 7.30 **EastEnders** (52761). 8.00 **EastEnders** (52762). 8.30 **EastEnders** (52763). 9.00 **EastEnders** (52764). 9.30 **EastEnders** (52765). 10.00 **EastEnders** (52766). 10.30 **EastEnders** (52767). 11.00 **EastEnders** (52768). 11.30 **EastEnders** (52769). 12.00 **EastEnders** (52770). 12.30 **EastEnders** (52771). 1.00 **EastEnders** (52772). 1.30 **EastEnders** (52773). 2.00 **EastEnders** (52774). 2.30 **EastEnders** (52775). 3.00 **EastEnders** (52776). 3.30 **EastEnders** (52777). 4.00 **EastEnders** (52778). 4.30 **EastEnders** (52779). 5.00 **EastEnders** (52780). 5.30 **EastEnders** (52781). 6.00 **EastEnders** (52782). 6.30 **EastEnders** (52783). 7.00 **EastEnders** (52784). 7.30 **EastEnders** (52785). 8.00 **EastEnders** (52786). 8.30 **EastEnders** (52787). 9.00 **EastEnders** (52788). 9.30 **EastEnders** (52789). 10.00 **EastEnders** (52790). 10.30 **EastEnders** (52791). 11.00 **EastEnders** (52792). 11.30 **EastEnders** (52793). 12.00 **EastEnders** (52794). 12.30 **EastEnders** (52795). 1.00 **EastEnders** (52796). 1.30 **EastEnders** (52797). 2.00 **EastEnders** (52798). 2.30 **EastEnders** (52799). 3.00 **EastEnders** (52800). 3.30 **EastEnders** (52801). 4.00 **EastEnders** (52802). 4.30 **EastEnders** (52803). 5.00 **EastEnders** (52804). 5.30 **EastEnders** (52805). 6.00 **EastEnders** (52806). 6.30 **EastEnders** (52807). 7.00 **EastEnders** (52808). 7.30 **EastEnders** (52809). 8.00 **EastEnders** (52810). 8.30 **EastEnders** (52811). 9.00 **EastEnders** (52812). 9.30 **EastEnders** (52813). 10.00 **EastEnders** (52814). 10.30 **EastEnders** (52815). 11.00 **EastEnders** (52816). 11.30 **EastEnders** (52817). 12.00 **EastEnders** (52818). 12.30 **EastEnders** (52819). 1.00 **EastEnders** (52820). 1.30 **EastEnders** (52821). 2.00 **EastEnders** (52822). 2.30 **EastEnders** (52823). 3.00 **EastEnders** (52824). 3.30 **EastEnders** (52825). 4.00 **EastEnders** (52826). 4.30 **EastEnders** (52827). 5.00 **EastEnders** (52828). 5.30 **EastEnders** (52829). 6.00 **EastEnders** (52830). 6.30 **EastEnders** (52831). 7.00 **EastEnders** (52832). 7.30 **EastEnders** (52833). 8.00 **EastEnders** (52834). 8.30 **EastEnders** (52835). 9.00 **EastEnders** (52836). 9.30 **EastEnders** (52837). 10.00 **EastEnders** (52838). 10.30 **EastEnders** (52839

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• Were this week's revelations about Will sleeping with Di designed to do anything other than promote Britain's newest media babe? **Liz Hunt** reports

The making of Julia

Hard-headed media-babe-turned-bitch or wronged wife struggling valiantly to build a new life alone? The jury is still out, but for Julia Carling, estranged wife of Will and a fledgling television star, this may have been the week in which she was made or broken in the public's affections.

This morning as Julia sits behind curtains drawn against the paparazzi at home in Putney, south-west London, she will be reflecting on the revelations of her "friend" who confirmed to the *Daily Mirror* Will's adulterous affair with the Princess of Wales and set off a tabloid feeding frenzy superseded only by the Dunblane massacre.

This friend described in detail how Julia confronted Will over phone calls charting calls to Kensington Palace and Diana's private line - "six times in an hour" on one day - and how he confessed the affair to his distraught wife.

Her pre-marriage doubts, her devastation when she found out the truth, and her new life alone with her dog, Bill, "her best friend now", were designed to make heart-rending reading. But the overall effect smacked first of revenge, and then of ambition.

Later today at Twickenham, just down the road from the smart, terraced house the couple once shared - now at the heart of an increasingly bitter divorce row - Will Carling will lead out the England team for his last match as captain. His place in history is assured: the most successful England rugby captain of all time and alleged lover of the wife of the heir to the throne.

However, Julia's play for posterity hangs in the balance. This might be her 15 minutes of fame, a bit player in the constitutional crisis triggered by the Wales' marriage breakdown. Or it could be the start of a media career for a talented woman who has done nothing more than seize the opportunities that came to her unbidden in the form of a royal scandal.

If Julia Carling ever saw herself as a rival queen of hearts to that other blonde, then last week she blew it. She emerged in the eyes of many as manipulative, vengeful, and grasping. If, however, the aim was to maximise the column inches, and focus attention on an obscure award for her work on a VH-1, a satellite music station to boost a blossoming terrestrial television career, then it was a resounding triumph.

And there was the satisfaction of wounding Will, her husband of less than two years, who cheated on her. And on top of that was the pleasure of embarrassing Diana, the other

woman who, through her own "friends", has accused Julia of using tabloid titillations to extract herself from a hasty marriage that had proved less than satisfactory. Mrs Carling also raised the stakes in the impending divorce battle; it is claimed that she wants the marital home and freedom from the outstanding £140,000 mortgage.

But of course the world exclusives that decorated the tabloid front pages this week actually had nothing to do with Julia, despite her husband's angry accusation through solicitors on Thursday that she was the source of the stories.

Tabloid therapy is the refuge of many celebrities and the story had apparently been hawked around for weeks. There was some reluctance to publish, explained another close friend of Julia's yesterday, because some of the reported conversations were based on bugged telephone calls.

For Julia is nothing if not a

Tabloid therapy is the refuge of many celebrities. But Julia has been described as 'just a pawn in the War of the Wales'

"Nobody had the guts to publish it until Piers Morgan at the *Daily Mirror* took a chance. It is so unfair to say that she had anything to do with this. She absolutely did not. She is just a pawn in the War of the Wales."

It has been suggested - and flatly denied - that Charles's camp planted the story to embarrass Diana during her divorce battle. "I don't know," the friend said. "But both of the Waleses are looking for any ammunition at all to fire at each other."

All nonsense, according to another source, a "friend" to none of the protagonists in this shoddy drama, but a seasoned tabloid watcher. "The only person to benefit from the stories this week was Julia Carling. The timing was perfect. The aim was to embarrass Will in an important week and grab the limelight just before the award."

Julia Carling does not fit easily into media categories. She is more up-market and street-wise than the "weather girls" like Tania Bryer and Ulrika Johnson, less sexually threatening than Mariah Carey but smarter than Gaby Roslin. She is prettier, neater, more petite and less irritating than Antoinette Turner. And perched, smiling broadly with tousled locks, atop a Grecian column on the cover of the April issue of *Esquire*, that is how she most closely resembles.

Until this week Julia Carling had played the media and the public to perfection. It wasn't difficult. Sympathy for the Princess of Wales was on the wane; Diana as love-starved

young woman who fell for the charms of a cad - James Hewitt, a single man - was acceptable. Diana as alleged sexually-driven marriage breaker was not. And Julia had stood by her man. She was seen standing close to him, fingers entwined, at every photo-opportunity, from the day in August 1995 when the *News of the World* broke the story of "Di's secret trysts with Will."

Initially the Carlings declared undying devotion and Julia showed her feisty underdog side. "Diana picked the wrong couple to do it with this time because we can only get stronger from it," she told newspapers. We lapped it up and rooted for her as time and again Will inflicted pain upon her.

In September Di and Will were pictured again leaving a sports clinic. On 28 September Will and Julia announced they had agreed to spend some time apart. In a carefully composed statement Julia spoke movingly of losing her husband "in a manner which has become outside her control".

At that stage the Will/Diana affair was still pure speculation. Every woman who has ever been cheated on applauded Julia Carling. Her increasingly frequent appearances in newspapers and television were regarded as a brave attempt to regain her self-confidence rather than someone capitalising on a crisis.

If she had left it there, according to Max Clifford, PR supremo and the man behind the first story in the *News of the World*, she would have had it all: public sympathy and a promising career.

But she could not resist pushing it too far, he says. "Will has had some good publicity recently, and I think she is a bad loser. You are not going to get too much sympathy from your average reader talking about financial insecurity, with a £70,000 television contract short-term or not."

He suspects there was an irresistible challenge, too: Julia believed she could take on the Princess of Wales and win the battle for hearts and minds. "That was a miscalculation. She thought she could beat the most famous woman in the world - an arch manipulator of the press - but still one of the most popular, at her own game. She couldn't."

Perhaps not, but if Clifford's interpretation is correct, there is a personal ambition driving Julia Carling that will not go away. And that means in all likelihood she will not either.



Jo Brand's week



If you haven't planned your holidays yet, I would suggest maybe you try and avoid somewhere where there are British squaddies, as they don't seem to be able to behave themselves when soaked in the amber nectar. A recent brawl at a bar in Cyprus resulted in a British soldier being shot. (One less bravado to deal with, I suppose.) The owner of the bar in which the brawl took place, ironically, is English, but quite rightly disowned her fellow citizens in a statement in which she said she felt ashamed. Brawls in Cyprus between local youths and squaddies are frequent. Maybe they've got too much energy, maybe they're bored or maybe the sort of bloke the army attracts is just a troublesome moron. Whatever it is, very few efforts seem to have been made to sort it out. Perhaps the officers just see it as an occupational hazard of training our boys (and children many of them are) to keep the peace, only to find they're the ones disturbing it. The only positive and rather unhelpful thing I can say about it is at least they are not over here.

A sample question in the GNVQ science exam asks examinees to identify a bird "obtaining nutrients" and offers four pictures - a bird holding a twig, eating a worm, preening its feathers and relieving itself. This exam is for 16-year-olds. This very difficult question only applies to potential rocket scientists, obviously. Even the tabloids with a reading age of nine aren't going to last long by the looks of it.

One always imagines Scandinavia as a bastion of liberal values, with tasteful porn, prisons like palaces, healthy Aryan youth, crèches for all, and extreme cleanliness. So it was a shock to discover that between all the saunas, smorgasbord and snow, bike gangs are slinging it out like true Californians. A war between Hells Angels and Bandidos looks set to claim more victims as it gets out of hand. Not only are they shooting at each other, but they are also leaving bombs under cars, which seems more in keeping with their pillaging ancestors, who all looked like Kirk Douglas and wouldn't flinch if an eagle pecked their eyes out. Then you discover that these bike boys are taking their orders from parent organisations in America, where these gangs are geographically too far apart to bother rucking with each other. But in little old Europe, of course, they don't have to make too much effort to come together. What a horrible



thought - bike boys come to Europe. Shampoo sales look set to plummet.

I wouldn't hold out too much hope for the Russian soldiers who got drunk and sold a tank and an armoured combat vehicle to Chechen rebels. In times of strife, I suppose it is reassuring to know that there can be a dialogue between sworn enemies. After all, in the First World War, soldiers from both sides stopped fighting and had a game of football outside the trenches. In this day and age, it seems they are prepared to be friendly - if they're making something out of it. Three cheers for capitalism.

It was reassuring to hear John Major's reasoned argument against

the European Union's attempt to set a 48-hour limit to the working week. It's stupid, apparently.

Of course it's stupid, if you put competition above everything else. Then again, so are attempts to protect employees' health, safety and rights at work. British employees work the longest hours in Europe, with nearly a third of men working full time doing more than 48 hours a week. No wonder everyone I speak to is always knackered. Maybe we're all stupid to have put up with it for so long.

A holiday boss in Amsterdam has set up a business sending postcards from exotic locations so people can



Wish you were here (honest)

impress their friends. I find it difficult to believe people are that shallow. If you have friends who would be impressed because you've had a flash holiday, I'd change your friends. Then there is the small problem of having to discuss the non-existent holiday with your friends when you "get back". No doubt this bloke will provide fact-sheets, so you can breeze through conversation about your "holiday" with ease. No worries about the actual contents of the postcard, I suppose. The likelihood of anyone British writing anything interesting on a postcard is zilch.

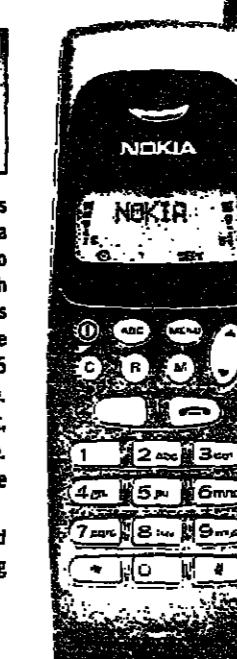
The Queen has been accused of making a racist remark about the people of Papua New Guinea by the writer Paul Theroux, who in return is accused of breaking royal protocol to report it. I'm glad he did. The fact that the Queen is using childish colonial words like "fuzzy wuzzy" is an eye-opener. She must have picked up the habit from Prince Philip.

I see a woman was fined £400 this week for lighting up on a non-smoking flight. Kind of takes away the savings you make at duty free, doesn't it? As a smoker, I would not encourage people to break the law, but I have a few suggestions for airlines that have banned smoking out of the blue on long-haul flights. First of all, you could stop selling cigarettes if we cannot use them. Secondly, you could let people know in advance that the flight is non-smoking instead of breaking the cheery news as they check in.

Thirdly, you can expect a bit of a mass (albeit wheezing) exodus on to Japan Airlines, who still have sympathy for us. I'm off to Australia in April and they're about the only buggers who will still let you have a smoke. Sayonara.

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Understanding how we failed to make them safe

You must have a jumble of feelings at the end of this most awful week. We go round and round, over and over, picking it up and putting it down again. We are drawn to it, need to know the dreadful reality of it: what happened in that gym that morning. And yet we are repelled by it. Our interest an intrusion upon a sorrow so profound that it can only be private.

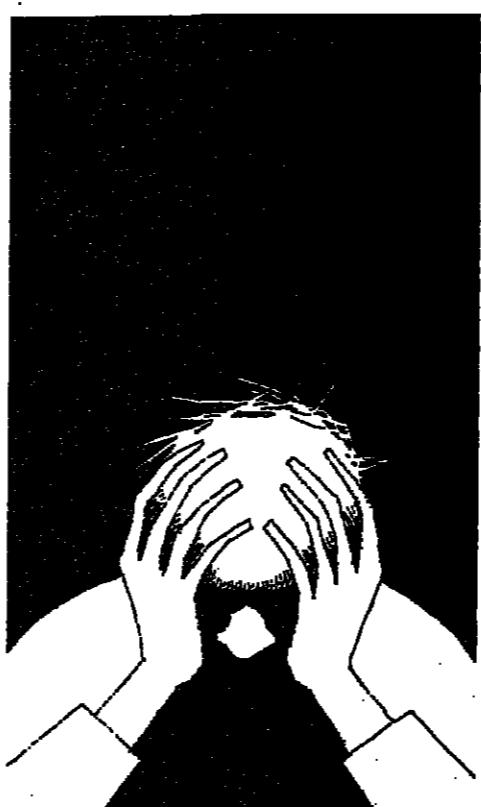
We want to know, don't we, how we let them down, those tiny children. Yet we know, we tell ourselves, "We didn't do it, he did." We feel that a terrible judgement upon our society, is inescapable when one of our members - for that is what Hamilton was - could commit such a crime. We must be a godless world, a pitiless place that such an arbitrary and cruel act could be possible. It was surely a reflection of a society that is deranged, unhinged, twisted. And yet we know, we tell ourselves, "We didn't do it, he did." He was an oddity, an aberration, someone so chaotic and evil that there could be no accounting for him and against which all planning is useless.

So we go back, and round, and back again. It is difficult to know even where to begin to explain it all, to understand. Yet attempt to understand we must, to make sure we do not smother the terror beneath a river of words, or comfort ourselves with hasty actions or anaesthetise ourselves with hollow rituals. We must try to understand it, knowing that we will never be able to fully explain it. But we must try, because without that effort of understanding we might as well accept defeat in the face of the flood of random risks and uncertainties of modern life. That is too bleak a prospect.

Start with that picture of Class P1 and their proud teacher, Gwenne Mayor, taken at the start of the school year. Hopeful, excited, curious, shy, bright, sweet, those children were above all trusting. They were trusting of their teacher and their parents, the adults around them and the world into which they had been brought.

And because they were so trusting, it is difficult for any adult to see that picture and not feel dismay, shame even, that we did not do better for them, that we did not make them safe. Of course we did not create Hamilton. As far as we know he never did anything so grave that any one person might have taken action to prevent Wednesday's killings. Like those other killers who seem to have passed beyond the boundaries of morality - Yigal Amir, Fred West and Timothy McVeigh - Thomas Hamilton's motives and values seem warped and distorted beyond recognition.

And yet the events at Dunblane come from somewhere. Hamilton emerged from the backdrop against which he acted. Hamilton's story, like the story of so much violence in our society, is a tale of men and weapons, sex and repression, power and revenge. The culture that encircles that school is one of incessant violence. Violence in the name of art, entertainment and news washes over us. Read it in Irvine Welsh, watch it in the film *Seven*, hear about it on television true-life crime programmes, play it out on video consoles, feel the thrill of becoming an assassin in arcades up and down the land. It's not just out there in culture: it's in families and homes, and almost certainly was in Hamilton's own contorted



home. The connection cannot be simple or singular. The thread of violence that runs through society starts and ends in many places. But which of us would be so confident that we could deny that Thomas Hamilton was at some point woven into it intricately?

We live in a disconnected culture. He was a loner, they say, as if this is an odd thing in our age. In our atomised society, intimacy is minimal and strangers are everywhere. We enjoy a culture that prizes independence and choice, yet that also produces some of its most troubling problems. Lone parents are the controversial objects of social policy. Single young men are the feared perpetrators of much violence. Loners like Hamilton are where benign singleness festers and turns poisonous, where being alone creates the space in which paranoia flourishes to burst out in violence.

The backdrop from which Thomas Hamilton emerged is complex. Tracing the connections between it and his actions last Wednesday is not simple. But there are connections and there will be lessons that we should ponder to make our society stronger, better able to take responsibility for violence.

That understanding would be easier if the lessons were simple, delivered clearly. But we now have no institutions, no moral leaders, who are unquestionably able to play that role for us.

The church has played a creditable part. It does at times of national mourning. But its moral leadership does not extend beyond the immediate provision of spiritual sustenance. The professionals - psychiatrists, social workers, psychologists, geneticists - peddle their particular explanations, but none of them match the scale of what has happened.

Politicians have done better than we might have feared. The silence and respect in the House of Commons, the dignity of Forsyth and Robertson, Major and Blair acting together, have spoken well of politics. We will look to politics for practicalities: the tougher policies we obviously need to control powerful handguns. But none of us seriously thinks that politicians will help to unpick the meaning of what has happened.

So where do we turn? To ourselves and our own civic culture. For that is what Dunblane stands for: decent, ordered, calm, civil, still a community in a society that has so few. That is what the school itself stands for: a place of refuge and togetherness, solidarity and hope, the cradle of civic virtue in a fragmenting society. Through this week, the teachers of that school, led by its headmaster, have provided the most profound examples of civic heroism, laying down their lives for the sake of their charges. And so too in remembering the tiny victims of Dunblane, we should engage in our own quiet and civic acts of remembrance this weekend by observing a quiet on Sunday. Beyond that, through memorials, planting trees, providing benches, through small and large acts, we can remember the dead.

The events in Dunblane did not come from nowhere. They emerged from a backdrop. If we look hard enough, we will all find ourselves upon that backdrop. That must be the starting point for our understanding, and also the most fitting place to make our remembrance.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dunblane massacre: glorification of violence is not confined to gun lovers

Sir: On 13 March, ITV's evening film was changed from *Licence to Kill* to *A Field of Dreams*. This was totally laudable given the violence committed in Dunblane earlier in the day.

However, as a society we try to have our cake and eat it. We "enjoy" the glorification of violence on the screen, is cool for the debonair Bond to clear his path of obstructing human beings. The reality as witnessed in that school's gymnasium is different. Are we peacemakers who are truly striving for peace and justice? If so, we must demystify violence and encourage every effort to provide peace.

Legislation is only part of the answer. Ultimately evil has to be confronted deep in the heart of every human being. It is when we recognise that and turn to the divine resources available to overcome evil that as a society we can get beyond a dream that sometimes turns into a nightmare.

The Rt Rev DAVID EVANS, Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Canterbury, Chichester and Rochester, Uckfield, East Sussex



Flowers at the gates of Dunblane Primary School

Photograph: Brian Harris

Sir: It is perhaps insensitive to attack our politicians for neglecting to take action which could have prevented the Dunblane tragedy, at a time that they share the general grief. But over the years, at intervals, members of gun clubs have committed violent crimes with the weapons they have been allowed to retain in their homes, and Parliament has done little. If Japan can have rigorous gun controls, why cannot Britain? Let us have the action from Parliament which will speak louder than all the words of compassion, however sincere.

E PAULL
London SW16

Sir: Why is any member of the public legally allowed to possess a weapon of the types used at Dunblane?

There are ordinary people, such as farmers with shotguns, who need to use guns in their daily lives, and those, such as soldiers and the police, who use them in the course of duty. I would not want to restrict the sensible use of guns in the course of work or sport. But I cannot see any reason for the possession of semi-automatic pistols being legal in open society.

JOEL BAILLIE-LANE
St Albans

Sir: There is one inescapable fact. The children and their teacher were killed by guns.

The murderer did not use bows and arrows, stones or knives: he used guns. His carnage was only possible using guns.

All the speculation as to motive, all the psychoanalysis, is a waste of time. There are people at large, and nothing can be done to detect them, who have the seeds of such destruction within them. Leave the means at their disposal and such disasters will occur. Gun control is patently a failure. Only gun eradication will do. There are very few legitimate reasons for possessing a gun, and sport is not one of them. Gun crimes of this kind are not carried out by mentally disturbed people who obtained their guns from the underworld. They were obtained from the vast pool of legal weapons. This pool must be removed.

ROBERT NAJIRN
London SE1

Sir: Tears come at any mention of the massacre at Dunblane and they are as much use as anything to the victims and their parents. But the count of the victims includes Mr Hamilton. His state of mind must have been beyond the bounds of loss and sorrow that we can imagine and he too suffered and died. It is repulsive to suggest that his suffering could weigh against the grief caused by his final articulation of it but there is an explanation for the terrible disproportion of what

shortage of nurses in almost every speciality and the reason for this shortage is more apparent in intensive care units than in other areas in, for example, 18 months. I would suggest that the current salary of £13,339 for nurses working in these areas is a rather inadequate incentive to undertake what would be a very demanding course.

It is my experience that nurses tend not to like being shunted from pillar to post. Although working in high dependency areas is stressful for nurses I would suggest that the work becomes less demanding as nurses become more familiar with it. There is a

NICHOLAS MARTIN, RGN
Anaesthetic Staff Nurse
Edgar, Middlesex

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Given that courses of qualified nurses in critical care specialities such as coronary care, anaesthesia and intensive care already last for six months, one must ask how long a course would have to be if a nurse was a

MICHAEL HEATH
Director General
Engineering Council
London WC2

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Shunting nurses about will not cure NHS ills

Sir: I must take issue with Professor Sir Roy Calne's letter (11 March) in which he suggests changes in nurse training to ameliorate the shortage of nurses in busy intensive care units. What he appears to be suggesting is the training of multi-skilled critical care nurses who can be moved from one department to another depending on which critical care areas are short of staff.

Given that courses of qualified nurses in critical care specialities such as coronary care, anaesthesia and intensive care already last for six months, one must ask how long a course would have to be if a nurse was a

Sir: The turmoil within schools over accommodating GCSE technology courses needs addressing as a top priority (report, 14 March). Reports that a shortage of qualified technology teachers and equipment is threatening mandatory courses due to be introduced in September should ring alarm bells throughout the nation.

The Engineering Council, together with other major engineering organisations, campaigned successfully for technology to be a key part of the National Curriculum because the UK's economic success is dependent on a strong engineering base. We have had a sad record of teaching technology in Britain over past decades and it is

DAVID L GARDNER
London SE1

seen that, at last, we were beginning to get our act together. For the development of future generations of first-class engineers and technicians now to be undermined by this crisis is extremely alarming.

JENNIFER MILLER
London SW15

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Seat of trouble

Sir: My thanks to The Independent magazine (9 March). Now at last I know the designer to curse when, with breaking back, I am enduring yet another event seated upon one of Robin Day's ghastly polycarbonate chairs. They are the antithesis of all that a well-designed chair should be: their only merit their stackability. Mr Day has inflicted misery upon the millions who have to use his chairs. I note that he is pictured seated upon a very different piece of furniture.

SALLY TURFF
King's Lynn

Sir: Everyone's ancestry is half maternal. How can the Queen's lineage be "largely German" (Letters, 14 March) when the Queen Mother is of British descent. George II, who died in 1760, was the last of our sovereigns not to be born in this country. No other family dominated here so long would still be thought of as German.

JENNIFER MILLER
London SW15

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Tory boundaries of common sense

Sir: Brian Mawhinney is engaging in a game of make-believe in claiming that the Tories would have achieved an overall majority of 41 instead of 21 had the new boundaries been in place at the last election (report, 14 March).

The only serious independent academic study, undertaken for the BBC and ITN by Thrasher and Railings from Plymouth University, indicates the government majority would have been 27. That was a rigorous exercise that included consultation with all political parties including the Conservatives.

Labour does indeed face a momentous challenge to gain the 50 seats necessary to win an overall majority at the general election. It represents the largest number of Labour gains since its 1964 victory.

But to argue that boundary changes have delivered a 20-seat bonus for the Tory majority while Dr Mawhinney's colleagues have been searching around the country on the chicken run for safer seats because of the very same changes defies intelligent analysis.

DAVID L GARDNER
London SE1

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PROFILE: Frank Bruno

The clown who craves respect

Bruno is fighting Tyson for Britain, for the Queen, for the money ... but mostly for his pride, says Jim White

The Sun is in no doubt about what Frank Bruno's fight with Mike Tyson in the early hours of tomorrow morning in a Las Vegas mega-hotel is all about.

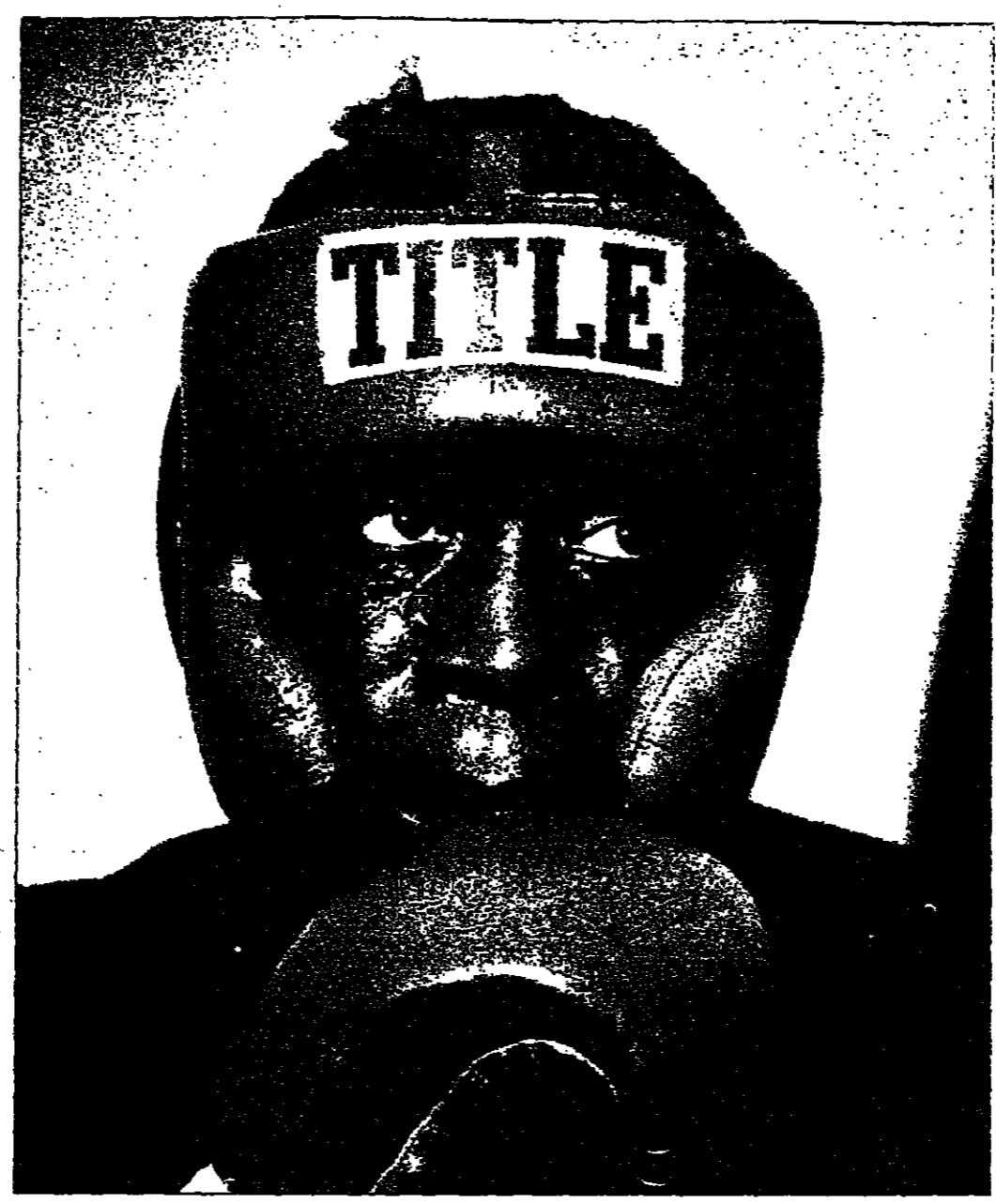
"Spank the Yank, Frank," read one of its headlines this week. And this was a typical contribution to the paper's fax line from a group of its readers: "We put the pride in Mother's Pride, put the great back in Great Britain, Frank" from British Bakers, Greenford.

Like the poor, Frank Bruno seems always to have been with us. He appears to have carried the nation's hopes in the most basic and brutal of sporting contests for a lifetime, yet he is only 34. For this scrap, against the man who embodies the dangers of the profession, the patriotism dials have been turned up to 11.

The Sun, favoured reading matter among the 3,000 Frank fans at present filling Vegas with their chants ("Broooomo, Broooomo"), has orchestrated the campaign. It characterises the fight as the collision between a righteous decent, home-loving Christian Brit and a dodgy, dangerous, convicted-rapist, Muslim American, a simple meet-

commercial edge to its frenzy, the Sun would probably be right behind Frank anyway. After all, it always has been. Such a wholehearted embrace of a black sportsman as a national hero is unique. Ian Wright, Linford Christie, Colin Jackson, Paul Ince, Daley Thompson, Lennox Lewis, Naseem Hamed, Chris Eubank: there has been something equivocal about the way those black performers have been lauded. Yet unwavering patriotic support has always been there for Bruno. I remember his first attempt on the world title at Wembley in 1980, when the big American Tim Witherspoon put out his lights in the 11th round. Sitting behind was a wobbly-jowled London racist who spent the entire fight yelling, "Goo on, Frank, smack the black bastard."

The suspicion that Bruno has been thus accepted because of the image that has developed around him: big, cuddly, slow, gentle Frank. None of the disconcerting potency of Linford Christie, just a warm, unthreatening presence, a booming voice always willing to be蔼 to some weary rehearsed gag. Encouraged by his canny wife,



Frank Bruno: he has not been his usual co-operative self in the pre-match publicity Robert Hallam

national figure, so it became easier for his boxing advisers to sustain his career.

The disappointing truth about Bruno is that, despite his Greek-god physique and massive punch, his boxing ability alone would not have given him the career he has enjoyed.

The problem with Frank is that

weight was widely expected to lose yet again when he fought Oliver McCall for yet another stitched-up heavyweight championship. But he had worked like a Trojan for his fight, produced the performance of his life, stayed on his feet and won it, his reaction afterwards a clear indication that he felt vindicated. "I always knew I could be World Champion," he said, behind a pair of shades hiding his injuries. That win set up a re-match with Tyson.

When Frank won the title, it meant a lot to the ordinary man in the street, the taxi driver and so on," says Frank Warren, his promoter. "If he beats Mike Tyson, it's the equivalent of England winning the World Cup in 1966."

But Bruno is not doing this for Britain. He is doing it for his own sense of pride. Tyson represents the pinnacle of boxing, the one heavyweight everyone fears with good reason ("He took some horrific punches that day," says Tyson of their previous encounter). "I just remember overwhelming him." There is no need, financially, for Bruno to go anywhere near him. Yet he is prepared to risk all in his bid to prove himself more than the bumbling horizontal he is widely

assumed to be. The paradox at the centre of Bruno's enormous effort is that he is seeking to rid himself of the image that has helped to make him famous.

The champion, angered by the manner in which he will receive only a fifth of the challenger's earnings for this bout, has been less than his usual co-operative self in helping the pre-match publicity. But in the few public utterances Bruno has made, his aim has become clear. The goadings of the Tyson camp ("thank you, Frank, for allowing Mike the privilege of knocking you out," sneered the American's manager) have landed home. At his last press conference the normally placid, polite, decorous Bruno gave the Tyson team an angry finger. What the clown craves more than anything, it seems, is enjoyed.

Tomorrow morning most British hearts, Sun-reading or not, would love Bruno, this romantic trier, this paradigm of British pluck, to stick the finger up to the world and achieve the ultimate in his sport. But most British heads just hope the referee will be quick enough to move in before real damage is done.

The paradox at the centre of his enormous effort is that he wants to be rid of the image that helped to make him famous

ing of good and evil, light and dark. The paper has a hidden motive for talking the fight up to a degree unprecedented even in a sport that invented hype: the Sun plays an important role as sales promoter for Rupert Murdoch's Sky TV. This fight will be the first ever pay-for-view event in Britain: to sell it at £14.95 on top of the usual Sky subscription, the fight has been promoted as the biggest event in the history of the universe.

But even if there were not a

and adviser, Laura, Bruno has been happy to exploit that image commercially. He has never disguised his affection for a pound coin ("What are you doing this for?" an American journalist asked him on Wednesday: "For my family, myself, the Queen and the money.") The cuddly clown image has helped make him a rich man; pantomime, HP Sauce advertisements, commercial endorsements by the barrow-load have followed him around. Once he became a

Last autumn the joke heavy-

Many ways to mourn for Dunblane

This weekend offers us a chance to express our grief, says Richard Holloway

One of the most moving times in my life was a morning I spent at the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington. Those who know the memorial will remember how simple, yet overwhelming it is: a long, low, undulating cliff of black marble on which are inscribed the names of every American killed in Vietnam.

In some places candles, maybe 16 candles, will be lit by children as visible but silent prayers. People will write messages and place them in pots before the altar; but not to be read. Maybe they will be burned after the service. And they must be honest messages expressing anger as well as grief. "Why?" "God, I hate you today!" "Shalom" "Forgive". "Heal".

And the churches mustn't use this outpouring of grief as a way of smuggling in their own message. We believe in a resurrection hope, a hope beyond all tragedy and regret. But we must also respect and stand

One of the ways we endure the death of loved ones is by acts of remembrance

alongside the hopeless, and allow their grief to express itself in its own way.

Many of them will be in our churches this weekend because they want to be part of the national mourning and because they acknowledge that churches, those "serious houses on serious earth", belong to everyone at times like this. They are places where our finitude and frailty can be acknowledged as in few other places.

I was in San Francisco the day Robert Kennedy was assassinated, I went into Grace Cathedral on Nob Hill to pray. They had placed the Stars and Stripes, draped in black silk, in front of a catafalque. I found myself weeping and I was far from alone. Tomorrow we'll weep in churches up and down the land and maybe some will realise for the first time what churches are really for.

The writer is Bishop of Edinburgh and Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church. Jean Holloway, his wife, is a well-known hymn writer.

Car sexism just drives me crazy

Jojo Moyes, no stranger to oily rags, takes a spanner to the myth that motoring is a man's world

Heard the one about the woman who used to hang her handbag upon her choke pull and couldn't understand why her car got such a poor mileage to the gallon? Or the woman who was told she might need occasionally to top her car up with a pint of oil - and religiously poured in a pint every week until the car wouldn't work any more? Nearly every mechanic has. And if you're female, they'll tell you - with the proviso: "I don't want to have a go at you ladies, but..."

Few people were surprised when an RAC survey this week announced that women were much more likely to be taken for a ride by their local garages. A third of complaints to the RAC about garages come from women mechanics apparently regularly overcharge them for routine work and dismiss genuine complaints.

After all, women aren't supposed to like cars. To ride in them is glamorous accessories; to drape showily across them at motor shows; to provide a market for the 1.1 litre supermarket runabout, yes. But actually to know about them, no.

"Garage mechanics are less likely to try it on with a male driver because there's always that possibility that he might know something," says the Automobile Association. "I'm afraid they just don't worry about that with women."

To be fair, many mechanics have just cause to be dismissive of women. An unscientific but intensive survey of young, smart, independent women revealed that five out of six could not change a wheel on their own cars.

"I took my car in for a service and the radio wasn't working," said one. "When it came out I paid the bill and they went through all the things they had sorted out - but all I cared about was that the radio still wasn't working."

"I'm totally clueless," said another. "I know, I get ripped off every time I go to my dealership. But I don't want my boyfriend or my dad telling me how to do anything, so the only way I'd



The notion that women can't tell a spark plug from a fan belt has never been true

blously from under the sill. "I thought you just wanted one that was pretty."

I eventually settled on a K-registration MGB roadster. Bodywork: honest. Engine: no pinking or smoking. Original chrome features: easily resilable. Overdrive: rare on pre-1973 models. "I like the colour," he said. "How do we put the roof down?"

According to motoring organisations, the increasing complexity of the modern engine means that another male stereotype - the Saturday morning fiddler-under-the-roof - is a dying breed. "Almost all modern cars have a computer brain. The classic analogy is that a new BMW has its engine management system a computer more advanced than the one that put a man on the moon," says the AA spokesman. "The complexity of modern cars means that even mechanics often don't know much about them. Routine maintenance is almost impossible now on a modern car. You could just as well do oil change, but most of it is electronics," he said.

But for those who find the idea of diving under a car bonnet almost as attractive as diving under the wheels, the outlook is not so depressing. The increasing popularity of fixed-price servicing for particular models means that customers are less likely to get ripped off. And technology means that the daunting complexity of today's engines is likely to be replaced over the years by something much more accessible.

"Ultimately the engine will probably be replaced by a number of black boxes. Car manufacturers will realise that in the end it's easier to replace the entire units," says the AA. "You will end up with a disposable engine that will sense when it is going wrong, send a signal directly to the AA and arrange a rendezvous."

A little black box is unlikely to tut-tut at your failure to check your oil pressure. It certainly won't tell jokes about your handbag.

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Yorkshire Water chief set for retirement at 52

PETER RODGERS
Business Editor

Trevor Newton, the Yorkshire Water managing director who shot to notoriety for avoiding showers and baths during the drought last year, is to retire early at the end of May at the age of only 52.

This completes a clear-out of all but one member of the executive board of Yorkshire, Britain's most unpopular water company, which admitted last

month that its failure to cope with the drought had cost nearly £150m.

Yorkshire Water denied that Mr Newton had been evicted from his £127,000-a-year job as a result of the water supply fiasco last year, which has led to a public inquiry that starts on Monday. A spokeswoman said: "It is his decision, he has not been sacked."

Other changes at the top of the company were almost com-

plete, she said. "Trevor feels that it is the right moment to retire for himself and the company to let a new team go forward."

However, Mr Newton's depar-

ture is bound to be interpreted at the very least as a voluntary sacrifice in the face of massive public outrage at the company's performance.

His claims about not bathing or showering for three months during the drought also rebounded when he admitted that he had been crossing the

Yorkshire border to bathe at his parents and his in-laws' homes.

Mr Newton will not get a pay-off or a pension top-up and the company would give no indication of whether he had another job lined up.

Yorkshire also announced

that Brandon Gough, former chairman of Coopers & Lybrand, the accountancy firm, is to take over as the £120,000-a-year non-executive chairman from Sir Gordon Jones next month. Mr Gough said he

would be looking to deliver "value for all stakeholders."

Sir Gordon, who is 69, said in December that he would be retiring within six months. He does not reach the latest retirement age of 70 until next February.

Mr Newton's own job as

group managing director is not

being filled and the company

has no plans to look for a full

replacement. Instead, Dr Kevin Bond, who is joining from the

National Rivers Authority on 1

April as managing director of

Yorkshire Water Services, the

main operating subsidiary, will

step into Mr Newton's role as

chairman. At the group board

level, Mr Newton's role will be

split between other directors.

Yorkshire Water said Mr

Newton, who has been at the

company for 20 years and, like

Sir Gordon, saw it through pri-

vatisation in 1990, would receive

a straightforward early-retire-

ment pension. This would be

under the water pension

scheme with no special benefits

and no golden handshake.

Like other Yorkshire Water

board members, Mr Newton's

earnings are modest by the

millionaire standards of some

big public groups.

He has 23,000 share options,

including 10,000 to which he

subscribed under Yorkshire's

employee ShareSave scheme,

and his total current profit if

they were exercisable now

would be £88,000 before tax.

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Trevor Newton: Taking early retirement at 52

Simpson quits Lucas amid GEC job talk

TOM STEVENSON
City Editor

George Simpson confirmed yesterday that he is stepping down as chief executive of Lucas Industries, fuelling speculation that he is poised to be named as Lord Weinstock's successor at GEC, Britain's largest electronics group.

The exact timing of Mr Simpson's departure remained unclear yesterday, with Lucas saying only that he would not be renewing his three year contract which expires at the end of March 1997. Mike Beard, a spokesman for Lucas, said: "The good news is George Simpson is here to stay for some time. He is here for up to another year."

That appeared to leave the door open for an earlier departure once Lucas had sorted out his successor. Lord Weinstock is expected to stand down as managing director of GEC in the autumn, shortly after his 72nd birthday.

GEC was tight-lipped on reports that it was about to offer the job to Mr Simpson. It refused to confirm that it would hold a board meeting on Monday or whether Lord Weinstock's successor would be discussed.

The announcement of Mr Simpson's impending departure followed a week of speculation about the proposed top level changes at GEC. As well as a replacement for Lord Weinstock, a successor Lord Prior as chairman is also expected soon. Names suggested for that job include Sir Peter Levene, former head of defence procurement and chief executive of Canary Wharf, the London docklands development. He was unavailable for comment yesterday.



Stepping down: Lucas chief executive George Simpson

Wembley the red £8m ha

SFA hands Barings pair virtual blackballing

NIC CICUTTI

The Securities and Futures Authority yesterday came close to a City blackballing of Peter Baring, the chairman of Barings, and Andrew Tuckey, his deputy, for their stewardship of the collapsed bank.

The regulator officially cleared Mr Baring and Mr Tuckey of responsibility for the collapse of the 233-year-old bank. Nevertheless, both men were required to give the SFA "assurances ... regarding the future". Mr Baring, who is aged 60, has told the SFA that he does not intend to re-enter the investment industry.

The SFA said yesterday that the individuals concerned, which it refused to name, were being held responsible for the collapse. If found guilty, they risk being barred from ever working in the securities industry again.

Another individual known to have been cleared is Geoffrey Barnett, the former chief operating officer at the bank. Barings was brought down in February last year by losses of some £860m run up by the rogue trader Nick Leeson in the high-risk derivatives market in Singapore. Leeson fled Singapore as the losses were discovered and surfaced in Frankfurt, Germany, several weeks later. After fighting a bitter battle

Mr Farrant said: "This is that if he wanted to be a director and it is exclusively in the field of corporate finance, he is welcome to apply to us. But he has indicated that he does not wish it to be in a wider capacity."

The SFA said: "By reasons of the positions they held, they were associated with the failure to detect and prevent the losses, and recognising this, both re-signed from the board in April 1995, expressing their deep regrets."

A number of other former executives at Barings were yesterday facing disciplinary action by the Securities and Futures Authority, their regulator, for their part in the merchant bank's collapse.

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Mr Farrant, the SFA's chief executive, said that he had no objection to Mr Tuckey remaining at Barings, where he has helped the bank in its advisory role over the Lloyds Bank takeover of TSB Group. "This is consistent with the undertaking he has given us."



Scene of the crash: Barings' chairman and his deputy have had to give assurances to the SFA about their futures

against deportation, he was returned to Singapore. He is now serving a six-and-a-half-year sentence in the state's Changi prison after admitting two counts of cheating.

Barings was rescued last spring by the Dutch banking group ING, which paid £1 for control of the bank in return for shoulderering the losses.

elements, all based in London.

In April last year, 20 key Barings staff based in Singapore, Tokyo and London left the company. They included Ron Baker, head of the financial products group; Tony Gamby, head of settlements; Peter Norris, former head of securities; Geoffrey Broadhurst, finance director; and Brenda Granger, head of futures and options set-

lements, all based in London.

In Singapore, James Bar, regional manager for South-East Asia; Simon Jones, regional operations manager, and Rachel Young, financial controller, also resigned.

Several of them were among

those investigated by the SFA.

Mr Farrant yesterday declined

to say which ones or whether

any of them had been cleared.

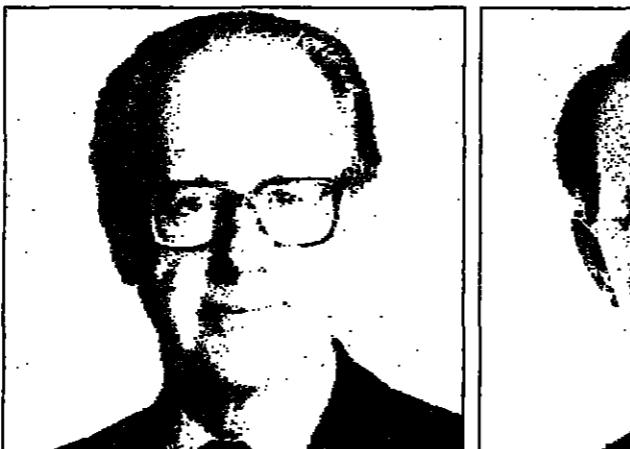
Mr George MacLean, the former head of the bank group, said yesterday: "I have received a bundle of papers which I have still not had time to examine fully. Until that time I am unable to comment."

An ING Barings spokesman said yesterday: "[We] are pleased that the SFA has reached the conclusion of their investigations into a number of current and former employees. The SFA is not currently considering any enforcement action against any person currently employed by ING Barings."

She defended the continued presence at the bank of Mr Tuckey. "He has no directorial or executive capacity and it is the case with any consultant that they make their recommendations and a director or executive takes a decision based on the recommendations."

Reports by the Bank of England and the Singaporean authorities last year both pointed the finger at his bosses for allowing him to break the bank.

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Cleared but restricted: Peter Baring (left) said he will not re-enter the industry. Andrew Tuckey said he will not seek a senior executive or director's position

Rentokil steps up BET attack

MAGNUS GRIMOND

Rentokil yesterday stepped up the pressure in its £1.8bn hostile takeover bid for BET by strongly criticising the textile to security group's growth record and questioning its strategy.

In a document sent to BET shareholders yesterday, Rentokil said the conglomerate's recent earnings growth had been driven by a cyclical upturn in its plant services business and acquisitions, masking an "unimpressive" performance from most of the rest of the group.

Underlying trading margins have sunk from 6.5 per cent to 6.2 per cent between the 1995 interim results and last year, Rentokil claims.

It says John Clark, BET's chief executive, had failed to deliver shareholder value, over-seeing a 45 per cent underperformance in the share price against the rest of the market since his appointment in April 1991.

Clive Thompson, chief exec-

Rival buys Blue Arrow for £48m

NIGEL COPE

Blue Arrow, the employment agency that was at the centre of a City scandal and lengthy fraud trial in the late 1980s and early 1990s, has been sold for £48m to a rival recruitment company.

Corporate Services Group, a fast-growing employment company whose shares are listed on the USM, will take control of Blue Arrow's 80 branches which specialise in temporary staffs. It is buying the company from its

management, which acquired the company from the US group Manpower in 1991.

Jeffrey Fowler, chief executive of Corporate Services, said he would retain the Blue Arrow name but use the group's database to convert clients to the concept of contract labour - where a company contracts out certain functions to an external agency.

Corporate Services has developed a profitable niche in this area and boasts a blue-chip client list which includes banks,

electronics companies and government agencies. Mr Fowler estimates that the market is growing at around 35 per cent a year as the concept gains acceptance. "We've placed doctors from South Africa into British hospitals and taken UK engineers to Japan. And we're doing all this from places like London and Barking. People are starting to understand this concept and we've barely started yet."

The company is paying £35m in cash for Blue Arrow with the balance paid in shares. It is

funding the deal though a placing and open offer of 45 million shares at 110p.

Corporate Services has grown rapidly in recent years. Last year it bought four companies for a total of £15m. The group made profits of £8.4m on sales of £133m. The combined company will have sales in excess of £300m.

The shares have risen from

13p three years ago to 126p, up another 4.5p yesterday. They have risen by more than 50 per cent this year alone.

US economy warms up for the spring

DIANE COYLE
Economics Editor

The American economy showed further signs of awakening from its winter hibernation with a surge in industrial output in February and improved consumer confidence.

Even though separate figures showed that inflation remained very subdued last month, Treasury bonds and Wall Street fell in reaction. The new evidence of faster growth dashed any remaining hopes that the Federal Reserve would soon cut interest rates.

Separately, Woolwich Building Society yesterday sold its 16-strong chain of upmarket residential agents, Chesterton International, for £8m. The deal returns the chain to Chesterton International, the group which sold it to Prudential in 1986.

Last month's rise in factory output was the biggest for five years, partly due to a rebound from January's blizzard-related decline. Manufacturing production increased by 1.4 per cent after a 0.3 per cent decline in January. Total industrial output, which also includes mining and utilities, was 1.2 per cent higher in February, while the previous month's drop was revised from 0.6 to 0.4 per cent.

Taking the two months together, most of the improvement was concentrated in business equipment and durable goods, including computers, home appliances and cars and trucks.

Further benign inflation figures did nothing to lift spirits in the financial markets. Consumer prices rose 0.2 per cent in February, leaving the annual inflation rate unchanged at 2.7 per cent. The "core" inflation rate, excluding food and energy, has been flat at around 3 per cent for the past three years.

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STOCK MARKETS									

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business



'Either the SFA believes Mr Tuckey is accountable, in which case he should be properly blackballed, or it does not, in which case he should be fully cleared'

Old school tie fudges the issue of fair treatment

The City practice of blackballing has always been an imperfect and unsatisfactory one. It works like this. The Bank of England or one of the other City regulators decides you are not fit and proper to hold a position of responsibility in the City offer investment advice. It is not necessarily obliged to give any reasons and most of the time does not. In the Bank of England's case there is a lengthy and mysterious appeals procedure, all heard in private you understand, which most agree breaches all principles of natural justice. But so what, it might be said. Whatever the system's faults, if it succeeds in keeping the rotten apple out of the barrel, then it can be no bad thing.

Now, courtesy of the Securities and Futures Authority, we have a new twist - the blackballing which is not a blackballing. Thus Peter Baring and Andrew Tuckey, though cleared of responsibility for the failure of their bank (a subtle point, this, since it was they who ran the show), have been asked for assurances that they will not seek to re-enter the investment industry. Mr Tuckey has given that undertaking but Mr Tuckey has not.

In Mr Tuckey's case a compromise has been agreed. If he limits himself to corporate finance advice, then he's OK. While this will clearly restrict him, it is obviously a fudge bordering on a show of old-school tie favouritism. Mr Tuckey has continued to work for Barings as a consultant, despite all that has happened. Either the SFA believes Mr Tuckey is accountable, in which case he

should be properly blackballed, or it does not, in which case he should be fully cleared. Proper rules and guidelines need to be laid down in this area. If the City is going to blackball, the process has to be seen as fair and equitable. The other ranks, meanwhile, look set to get it in the neck. The SFA's silence on the others can only mean it intends disciplinary action against them.

Yorkshire finally grasps the nettle

It has taken Yorkshire Water longer than it might have done, but finally the nettle has been grasped and the two most senior positions in the company, chairman and managing director, are to be vacated and filled with new blood. There is always the possibility, of course, that Yorkshire will receive a takeover approach, that Sir Gordon Jones and Trevor Newton, like their Court at South West Water, will have to be "persuaded" against retirement so that the barricades can be manned and the invading hoards seen off.

Joking apart though, the odd thing about the Yorkshire duo's departure is that the company won't admit it has anything to do with last year's drought. No, neither has been sacked, the company insists, they are just retiring. Cut stuff this. While it may be just about believable in the case of Sir Gordon Jones, who is in his late sixties, it is not in Mr

Newton's. He is just 52 and gold plated through the remuneration packages of utility bosses tend to be, that is not an age at which anyone willingly retires.

Mr Newton is the man who famously urged his customers not to take baths, and then was caught taking one himself in a neighbouring water region. In his public relations, Mr Newton was plainly inept. This was also the man who at one stage was spending hundreds of thousands a week tankering water around Yorkshire to cope with the company's inadequately prepared water infrastructure. There is another odd feature about all this, however. Normally managements are turfed out because of discontent among shareholders. This is not the case with Yorkshire where the City was generally supportive of encumbent management throughout last year's drought. Ironically, Yorkshire's management was thought of as amongst the most enlightened and sensitive of the water companies. Furthermore, neither man is leaving with any kind of pay-off or pension top up. In that sense they are genuinely "retiring", doing the honourable thing after a year in which they were lambasted and ridiculed by their customers for failure to anticipate the drought. Their departure has nothing to do with failure to deliver shareholder value.

Nor are their successors - Brandon Gough and Kevin Bond - the utility fat cats of legend. The new chairman comes in at "just" £120,000 a year and Mr Bond at £135,000, no options, no bonuses and no long-term incentive pack-

ages. These are not large sums for a company of Yorkshire's size - it is not hard for an honest job. Could this be stakeholder capitalism in practice? Neither the departures nor the rates of pay reflect the normal priorities of the City. Rather, they are a response to the demands of ordinary customers.

US prospects suggest a happy ending

It has all the hallmarks of a disaster movie: the runway lies directly ahead, the pilot cannot see in front of him, the panels are giving erratic readings and there is a blizzard buffeting the aircraft. The story of the US economy has been a cliffhanger for the past six months or more, but after the latest figures the soft landing scenario is coming to seem the most likely once again. The pace of activity is now showing clear signs of picking up after lingering dangerously close to recession. Inflation is low and will remain so at least until much later in 1996. Like the movies, a happy ending is in prospect.

The markets do not like it, of course. They would have preferred a crash landing guaranteeing the demise of inflation and an injection of cheap money to revive the economy. This is short-termism with a vengeance. What could be better for the profitability of American companies than faster growth with inflation well under control? The stock market has been overlooking the fact that the tilt

towards recession which would have led to lower interest rates was spring to its profit's too. Fourth-quarter earnings have disappointed analysts' expectations. The fact that the economy appears to have pulled out of the nosedive will help improve earnings this quarter. The pick-up might carry the penalty of higher inflation towards the end of the year but there is no sign of it yet. Meanwhile, chief pilot Alan Greenspan has his craft back under control.

Fokker's failure cheers the sceptics

Horoscopes are bound to take heart from Fokker's predicament. It will confirm their claims about the impact on industry of joining a strong and rigid currency area dominated by the mark. Fokker is certainly a case study in how a middle-ranking company, operating in world-wide dollar-based markets, is likely to have a dreadful time if it is based in whose currency is hampered by the mark. But this was not the only factor behind Fokker's demise. Daimler-Benz Aerospace, the controlling shareholder, also failed to get a grip on strategy. It spurned the Franco-Italian ATR consortium's attempt to consolidate the European feeder aircraft industry to reduce costs and strengthen marketing. Instead, it demanded that the business should be concentrated around Fokker and Dornier, DASA's turbo-prop subsidiary. That sealed Fokker's fate.

Wembley stays in the red with £8m hangover

NIGEL COPE

An increase in the number of pop concerts - including several by Rod Stewart, the Rolling Stones and Bon Jovi - helped increase operating profits at leisure group Wembley last year, though restructuring charges still dragged the troubled company to an £8m loss.

The company is awaiting the decision of the Sports Council on whether Wembley or Manchester will be chosen as the preferred location for the new National Stadium. Wembley expects the long-delayed decision in the next few months and the board said yesterday that it had "an extremely strong case".

The 72-year-old stadium has already beat off rival bids from Birmingham, Sheffield and Bradford and is now in a two horse race.

Finance director Nigel Potter dismissed suggestions that the company's future relied upon winning the nomination. "In the short to medium term it would have little or no impact because we have contracts with the FA for major events that last until 2002," he said.

"Whichever way the decision falls Wembley Stadium will always be an attractive international location for sports and entertainment events."

Wembley said the appointment of Peter Mead, a director

of the advertising agency Abbott Mead Vickers as a non-executive director last week would boost its marketing campaigns.

Jarvis Astaire, the showbusiness impresario, will remain on the board and draw on his contacts in political circles to help Wembley's case.

In the year to December 1995 Wembley reduced its losses to £8m compared to the previous year's £35m. The loss is attributable to the cost of re-financing of the group last year.

Operating profits increased from £11.7m to £19.7m boosted by seven pop concerts held during the year, compared to

none in 1994. The total number of events rose from 22 to 29.

Bookings for 1996 are also ahead of last year at both Wembley Arena and the stadium. Concerts confirmed for this year include Tina Turner, The Eagles and the Three Tenors. Six European Championship football fixtures are also scheduled for Wembley this summer.

Sales and profits were down at the UK greyhound racing tracks with Wembley blaming the fall on the National Lottery.

Chairman Claes Hultman

said the company had generated £25m of free cash flow last year and reduced its gearing to 42 per cent compared to last year's level of 52.3 per cent. Its borrowings now stand at £65m.

He stressed that no acquisitions would be made. "We have plenty of ideas to make these assets sweat," he said.

Last year was traumatic for Wembley. As well as a refinancing and a £35m loss it included the departure of long standing chairman Sir Brian Wolfson and five others including Sir Peter Thompson and Alex McCrindle. Alan Cappin was appointed chief executive.

The shares closed 2p down at 365p last night.

Making the assets sweat: chairman Claes Hultman

Facilities management, which was acquired three years ago, chipped in a useful £3.5m from sales of £1.25m. Access products - scaffolding and ladders - had a good year, pushing profits up from £1.0m to £1.3m net after sales jumped to £13.9m (£13.1m).

These were all good performances but the key to Wembley is plainly whether or not it can squeeze even a modest return from its substantial contracting turnover.

Milton believes a margin of between 2 and 3 per cent is possible, which even at the lower end would double group operating profits.

It is that potential that has seen Mowlem's sharesudge up from their recent low of under 60p to yesterday's 79p, up 5p. At that level, and on the basis of a forecast of perhaps £13m profits this year, the shares stand on a prospective price/earnings ratio of about 13.

That pushed Mowlem back into familiar red territory, resulting in a pre-tax loss for the year of £30m compared with 1994's £4.8m profit. Despite a chunky 17.6p loss per share, the 3p dividend was maintained.

Ken Minton was too diplomatic to say so yesterday but the industry he has entered, after a successful stint in chemicals with Laporte, is a complete shambles. In which other business could a company make a profit of £300,000 from sales of £967m, as Mowlem's contracting arm did?

It is a shame that the core division is so dismal because elsewhere in the group there are some interesting and profitable companies. Brightest of those is the environmental services division, which, as a market leader in geotechnical consultancy work and contaminated land testing, generates an enviable return on sales. Profits of £3.2m were struck in 1995 from sales of £23m.

If you believe that Mr Minton has really cleared out the dross and set up a recovery, the shares have a way to go. After the recent performance, however, it is a sizeable fit.

Molins rolls up record profits

Most of the City stopped following Molins years ago, after five successive bids suggested its days as an independent company were numbered.

But analysis has missed a trick. The cigarette machinery group successfully saw off all the would-be predators and since 1991 the share price has tripled, outperforming the market by 25 per cent in the past 12 months alone.

Yesterday's figures - which sent the shares another 21p higher to an all-time peak of 900p - should revive in-

terest in the group. Pre-tax profits rose by 24 per cent to £29.8m in the year to December, on sales 28 per cent up to 200.

The figures were distorted by a change in the treatment of Molins' £51.3m pension surplus, which cut the credit to profits from £3.3m to £0.1m this year. But that was more than offset by the first significant contribution of £3.8m from Sandiacre Packing Machinery, which was acquired for £8m in 1994.

Stripping that out, it is clear that the cigarette machinery operation should be mature, yet it managed a 25 per cent increase in sales in 1995. Operating profits of £3.3m, up 12 per cent, were affected by the pension changes and underlying margins are said to be slightly ahead.

Cigarette consumption in the Western world is barely growing and this

week's Liggett settlement could hardly dent the big tobacco companies' profits. But Molins points out that these pressures could spell good news for suppliers of increasingly sophisticated machinery like itself, as the drive to reduce costs intensifies. Meanwhile, third world demand, already solidly underpinned by soaring consumption of cigarettes, is magnified by moves from hand-rolled to machine-rolled product.

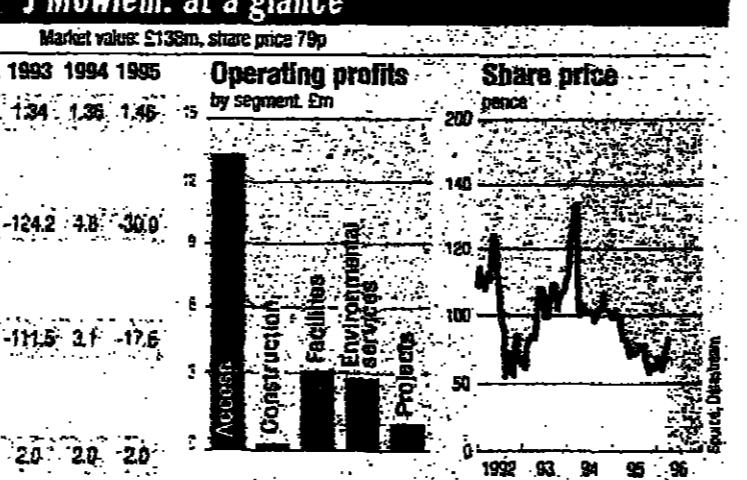
The corrugated board machinery division continued last year's improvement. Increased demand eliminated losses in Bristol and raised operating returns from the US business, which commands around 30 per cent of the domestic market. Profits jumped 40 per cent to 65m.

More exciting, though, is packaging machinery, which is effectively a new operation centred on Sandiacre. The latter has fully lived up to expectations at the time of purchase, although the results have been affected by the costs of expanding the new business and higher development spending.

Molins believes it can lever off its high-speed cigarette-making technology and world-wide marketing network to create a new business serving the multinational food industry. Pyramid-shaped tea bags for Unilever's PG Tips and bags for frozen coffee are just two applications so far developed. The group is now looking for bolt-on acquisitions "measured in tens of millions of pounds" to broaden the range.

With order books 13 per cent ahead and a competent new management team in place, there looks plenty to go for at Molins.

Charterhouse Tilney reckons profits could come close to £34m this year, putting the shares on a modest forward p/e of 12. Still good value.



Dividends per share (pence): 1991 1.5, 1992 4.0, 1993 2.0, 1994 2.0, 1995 2.0.

Market value: £138m, share price 79p

J Mowlem: at a glance

Five year record 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995

Turnover (£m) 1.39 1.23 1.34 1.38 1.49

Pre-tax profits (£m) -18.9 -36.5 -124.2 4.8 -30.0

Earnings per share (pence) -6.1 -37.3 -111.5 3.7 -17.6

Dividends per share (pence) 1.5 4.0 2.0 2.0 2.0

EPS 1995 1.5

PE 1995 13.0

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J Mowlem: at a glance

Five year record 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995

unit trusts/data

Foreign Exchange Rates

STERLING		DOLLAR			D-MARK		
Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	Spot	1 month	3 months	Spot
US	157.95	161.25	162.25	150	152	153	16.74
Canada	159.95	161.25	162.25	154.25	155.25	156.25	16.93
Germany	151.45	151.45	151.45	150.25	150.25	150.25	16.22
France	159.65	160.75	161.75	158.50	159.50	160.50	16.22
Italy	159.45	159.75	160.75	158.50	159.50	160.50	16.22
Austria	151.55	151.75	152.75	150.75	151.75	152.75	16.22
Belgium	152.25	152.50	153.50	151.25	152.25	153.25	16.22
Denmark	150.95	151.25	152.25	150.25	151.25	152.25	16.22
Ireland	150.75	151.00	152.00	150.00	151.00	152.00	16.22
Portugal	150.55	150.75	151.75	150.00	150.75	151.75	16.22
Norway	156.25	156.50	157.50	155.25	156.25	157.25	16.22
Spain	155.55	155.75	156.75	154.75	155.75	156.75	16.22
Sweden	151.25	151.50	152.50	150.25	151.25	152.25	16.22
Switzerland	150.25	150.50	151.50	150.00	150.50	151.50	16.22
Australia	156.55	156.75	157.75	155.25	156.25	157.25	16.22
Hong Kong	150.55	150.75	151.75	150.00	150.75	151.75	16.22
Malta	157.75	158.00	159.00	156.25	157.00	158.00	16.22
New Zealand	155.25	155.50	156.50	154.25	155.25	156.25	16.22
Saudi Arabia	155.55	155.75	156.75	154.25	155.25	156.25	16.22
Singapore	151.25	151.50	152.50	150.25	151.25	152.25	16.22

OTHER SPOT RATES

Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	1,229	2,600	Uganda	19,952	84,250
Austria	5,672	11,204	Uttar Pradesh	25,370	67,651
Brazil	1,559	3,674	Peru	2,502	14,465
China	2,892	3,377	Philippines	19,945	56,265
Egypt	5,766	3,379	Portugal	20,057	55,265
Finland	7,959	4,623	Pakistan	1,673	1,671
Greece	2,661.25	5,611.0	Palestine	7,655.94	45,200
Greece	3,617.5	3,120.0	South Africa	5,657	19,933
India	2,371	34,100	Yemen	18,939	17,700
Iraq	3,650	2,932	UAE	5,6384	27,730

Tourist Rates

C Buys		C Buys		C Buys	
Australia (Dollar)	191.50	France (Franc)	74500	New Zealand (Dollar)	21600
Austria (Schilling)	55.500	Germany (Mark)	12875	Norway (Kroner)	36500
Belgium (Francs)	44.7500	Greece (Drachma)	342500	Portugal (Escudo)	1062500
Canada (Dollar)	2.2575	Hong Kong (Dollar)	74500	Spain (Peseta)	332500
Cyprus (Pounds)	0.7500	Switzerland (Franc)	13500	Sweden (Krona)	10250
Denmark (Kroner)	545.50	Thailand (Baht)	2350000	Switzerland (Franc)	31250
Ecuador (Guinea)	24.6500	Japan (Yen)	1625000	Turkey (Lira)	9575000
Finland (Markka)	65.5000	Malta (Lira)	25425	United States (Dollar)	14500

Bond Yields

Country	5 yr	Yield %	10 yr	yield %	Country	5 yr	Yield %	10 yr	yield %
U.S.	5.2%	7.4	6.4	6.6	Germany	9%	6.5	7.1	6.6
U.S.	5.1%	6.5	5.7%	6.5	Spain	11.7%	10.5	12.1	11.7
Japan	6.0%	17.5	14.5	15.7	Austria	11.5%	12.0	11.5	11.5
Australia	5.7%	8.5	7.5	7.5	Sweden	10.5%	10.5	10.5	10.5
Germany	5.0%	5.5	5.5	5.5	United Kingdom	11.5%	12.0	12.5	11.5
France	5.0%	5.5	5.5	5.5	Switzerland	10.5%	10.5	10.5	10.5
					Canada	9.5%	9.5	10.5	9.5
					U.K.	10.5%	11.0	11.5	10.5
					U.S. (10 yr)	9.5%	9.5	10.5	9.5

Source: SEC Market Report. Yields calculated on local basis. *Denotes new benchmark.

Money Market Rates

	0 Night	1 Day	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
Interbank	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1
Bank CDs						
Local Autonomy Dept.	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1
Discount Window Dept.	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1
Treasury Bills (BAA)	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1
Dollar CDs						

Liffe Financial Futures

Liffe Financial Futures					
Contract	Settlement price	High/Low for day	Est Contracts traded	Open interest	
Long Gil	105.32	106.40	105.10	2250	14078
German Bond	96.51	95.70	96.00	143095	220542
JG Bond	126.57	126.95	126.83	1341	0
Italian Bond	108.45	108.90	108.10	35904	52210
3M Sterling	93.87	93.88	93.86	7912	54484
3M Euro	93.93	93.98	93.91	2400	17072
3M Euro 5	94.57			0	0
3M Euromark	96.64	96.66	96.63	16250	223507
	100.58	96.72	96.69	22214	290428
ECU	95.32	95.34	95.32	432	5520
	95.51	95.42	95.41	941	7271
Euro SFr	98.20	98.22	98.17	1547	17312
FT/SE 100	96.60	96.23	96.58	4579	7659
FT/SE 250	42220			0	1458
Eurodira	90.13	90.20	90.13	3341	24485

March
April
May

May June	12/77 12/96	7/87 94/18	3/88 70/144	30/88 50/174	..	
Commodities						
INDUSTRIAL METALS - London Metal Exchange						
Commodity	Cash	3 mths	Volume	LME Stocks	chg	
Aluminium 14575-765	8025.06	8287	71050	-	725	
Aluminium Alloy	1340.56	175.80	979	7636	-	760
Copper A 2335.375	2488.79	6355	30657	-	150	
Lead 7825.635	775.75	16862	8975	-	825	
Nickel 2115.25	8225.30	10458	18636	-	225	
Tin 675.85	230.50	4591	5945	-	25	
Zinc 1022.33	1250.51	15060	16802	-	275	
Sachet Conversion recycling rates	£1 15000	£2.5m 10000	5.7 10000	Stock volumes & change in tonnage as at Friday 15 March		
PRECIOUS METALS						
bar 1oz	£	£	Coins	£	£	
bar 1oz	5	5	Coins	5	5	

Patinum	6150	26350
Palladium	3875	95.85
Silver spot	557	46.5

God Bain		150	25000	BrentanOil	51	54	1000	150/453	250/500	Scandinavia & Son
AGRICULTURAL										
Cocoa		Coffee		Barley		Potatoes		Potatoes		
1Qc	£/tonn	LCE	Stone	LCE	Stone	LCE	Stone	ATA	Stone	£/tonn
Mar	378	Mar	2097	Mar	1325	Mar	17550	Apr	251	205/25
May	392	May	1904	May	1035	Apr	19200	May	312	195/25
July	316	JUL	1836	Sept	10585	May	22500	Jun	330	195/25
Vol.	3,554	Vol.	8,051	Vol.	12	Vol.	40	Vol.	261	195/25
White Sugar		Raw Sugar		Freight		Wheat		Cereals		
1Qc	Stone	LCE	£/25	LCE	Stone	LCE	Stone	CBOT #4	Stone	1200 Pounds
May	38720	Mar	1130	Feb	1120	Mar	11650	Mar	1140	Mar
Aug	36450	May	1150	Mar	1150	May	11910	May	1150	Mar
Oct	22835	JUL	1130	May	462	May	12100	May	1150	Mar
Vol.	1,671	Vol.	0	Index	1263	Vol.	270	Jul	37400	Mar
Source: CME										
Other Softs (Agricultural)										
Mar	Maize (No.3)*	Stone		2465	Apr	Scoya Oil	£/100kg			880
Mar/Apr	Copra (1)	Stone		570	Feb/Mar	Coconut Oil (1)	Stone			7275
May	Cotton (11)	US\$/lb	1.15	642	Apr	Butterfat Oil	Stone			5550
Apr	Wool	Acreing		6500	Mar/Apr	Butterfat Oil	£/100kg			8675
Apr	Rubber	Mounting		2915	Apr/May	Groundnut Oil	Stone			3550
Original Data/US - only crop - 1=Prepaid/2=Forward/3=Future/4=**Malaya/5=** Europe Source: FT Information Reuters										
ENERGY										
Brent Crude		(S-barrel)		Gasoil		(S-barrel)		Products		
1PE	5.50pm	1/10g	1/10g	1PE	close	1/10g	1/10g	8pm	Spot Of North West Europe	
Apr	17.97	0.04	1658	Mar	16700	+1.2	May	1787	Loaded Gasoil	188-190
May	17.30	-0.37	1655	Apr	1675	-1.25	Apr	1895	Gasoline	188-176
Jun	16.95	-0.05	1653	May	1652	-0.50	May	1845	EC Gasoil	165-167
Vol.	18,733	Index:	19.06	Vol.	11,286	Aug	1915	Heavy Fuel Oil		146/166
*Since 1990 previous data - New avg prices show average for month. Source: CME, London Oil Reports, 16pm prices										
COMMODITY INDICES										
*GSCI Indices		Base date	+Spot	1 Day Chg	Dec 31st	% Yr to date	1 Day Chg	Year ago	% Yr chg	
Indus.	1975 = 100		1974	-1.23	203.50	-1.27	174.50	-1.27	-1.27	
Agriculture	1970 = 100		284.79	+0.15	291.75	+1.08	257.42	+1.03	+1.03	
Energy	1970 = 100		563.09	+0.55	713.1	+4.54	501.15	+4.51	+4.51	
Industrial Metals	1977 = 100		477	-0.92	192.22	-1.20	102.77	-1.27	-1.27	
Livestock	1970 = 100		164.02	-0.82	162.71	-0.71	179.49	-0.71	-0.71	
Precious Metals	1973 = 100		506.52	-0.39	499.95	-1.40	491.04	-1.43	-1.43	

100 Largest Insurance Funds

100 Largest Insurance Funds					
Stock	Eq	Md	Offer	Stock	Eq
Abbey Life Managed 54	701	7318	London Life Mutual	842	65525
Abbey National Managed	221	245	LMG Managed Bond	9271	10265
AEFL Life Managed 1	5725	32647	LMG Managed Income Bond Ser A	1224	1025
AEFL Life Ser B	512	2159	Merchant Inv. Managed	525	5643
AEFL Life Pre-1983 3 Var	6640		MSI Managed	1570	1124
Alberta Multiple Investments	7485		MSI Managed	1521	128
Almed Dumb Managed	1274	15225	Matthew Group Managed	1521	132
AAA Ed. Standard 52	8784	6454	NU Mutual Bond	1520	123
AA & Ed. Inv St	171	145	Narrows Union	1519	243
Barclays Standardized	771	1521	Northwest Union	1518	5221
Battalion Managed	551	8627	Northwest Union Managed Inv.	1516	1737
Brockman Inv. Secd	5242	58359	NPV Managed	1515	5013
Black Horse Managed Inv St	54151	51020	Pearl Managed Gross	1514	8031
Bintex	1245	555	Pearl Bond Fund	1513	1245
Centra. Mid. Fid. Spprogs	125	1427	Prudential Mid. Managed	1512	5457
CLIF Managed	123	1565	Prudential Mid. Prudent Managed	1511	4263
CLIA Managed 51825	834	8621	Prudential Inv. Managed 52	1510	5644
Colonial Mutual Managed	121	8565	Putney Managed 51	1509	4975
Concordance Managed 54	505	13065	Reliance Managed	1508	4723
Corbett Managed 4	520	1525	Royal Hart Inv. Income Del	1507	2436
Crown Managed	621	7121	Royal Inv. & Mana. Inv.	1506	5523
CU Prime Managed	416	4720	Royal Scottish Growth Managed	1505	1668
Edge St. Ed. Inv. Managed	214	2553	Santini & Prepper Building Inv.	1504	2540
Ed. State Inv. Managed	201	2648	Scotian Amfac. Managed	1503	5561
Ed. Managed	79	1512	Scotian Equitable Fund	1502	3467
FFC Corp. Standard Managed	141	2023	Scotian Inv. Inv. Fund	1501	3416
First Penn. Fid. Managed	225	2411	Scotian Inv. Inv. Fund	1500	3416
GA Managed	2265	1520	Scotian Inv. Inv. Managed	1499	3471
Gen Fisher	219	1520	Scotian Inv. Inv. Managed	1498	3471
Gen Foothill & Colonial	223	1520	Scotian Inv. Inv. Managed	1497	3471
Gen Managed	121	2010	Scotia Balanced Managed	1416	4523
Gen Inv. St 51	219	1521	Scotia Fid. Managed	1415	2543
Gen Personal	571	2121	Scotia Fid. Managed	1414	2293
GPE U.L. Managed	721	7921	Standard Equity	1413	2221
Hamer. Accru. Inv. Managed	199	1521	Standard Inv. Mana.	1412	6674
Hill Samuel Managed 4	515	621	Sun Alliance Managed	1411	3569
Hill Samuel Managed 5	570	1521	Sun Alliance FO Inv. Inv. &	1410	3569
Hill Samuel Large Inv. Growth	329	1521	Sun Alliance FO Inv. Inv. &	1409	3569
Hill Samuel Large Inv. Growth	329	1521	Sun Alliance Inv. Inv. Fund	1408	3569
Hill Inv. Inv. Managed 53	605	1521	Sun Life Inv. Mana.	1407	877
H. Johnson Mid. Managed	621	1521	Sun Life Inv. Mana.	1406	1022
J. Prudential Std. Acc. Managed	585	1521	Sun Life Inv. Mana.	1405	4671
J. Prudential Std. Acc. Managed	585	1521	Sun Life Inv. Mana.	1404	4671
Lawrence Managed 52	620	1521	TD Horizons	1403	2923
Legal & Gen Managed 52	721	1521	Unis. Inv. Inv. Managed	1402	2639
Liberty Managed	521	901	Unis. Inv. Inv. Managed	1401	2639
Liberty Inv. Spouse 4	521	1521	Unis. Inv. Inv. Managed	1400	2639
Lincoln Inv. Inv. 3	1015	1521	Unis. Inv. Inv. Managed	1399	2639
Lincoln Inv. Inv. Managed 3	563	1521	Unis. Inv. Inv. Managed	1398	2639
Lincoln Inv. Managed 4	3015	1521	Unis. Inv. Inv. Managed	1397	2639
Lincoln Inv. Managed 5	1521	1521	Unis. Inv. Inv. Managed	1396	2639

sport

Australian nerve versus the Sri Lankans' verve

It was in the tea leaves from the start. When Australia kicked off their World Cup campaign by refusing to go to Sri Lanka, it was somehow inevitable that the two teams would end up in the final.

We can forget about the diplomatic arm-waving for a while. In Lahore tomorrow the teams, like town toughs having a barney behind the bike-sheds, can have themselves a damn good sort-out on the pitch. The only thing that could make it more poetic would be if the organisers suddenly decided - citing security hazards in Pakistan, say - to shift the final to Colombo.

It is possible that Australia would not mind this. For them, the final is very much an away match. In Pakistan, no one can compete with India in the most-hated-nation stakes, but Australia are public enemy No 2. The dust surrounding last year's unproven bribery allegations against Salim Malik by Shane Warne and Tim May has far from settled, and Australia will be given a reception they will not forget in a hurry.

They have recently committed, in the eyes of Pakistan's ultra-cynical cricket fans, a new crime. It is widely (and wildly) touted here that they allowed themselves to lose to the West Indies in that last group match - as a friendly gesture to their fellow Colombo residents.

As if this was not enough, the Sri Lankans are all honorary Pakistanis now, after their victory over India in the semi-final.

There is, in other words, a fair amount blowing in Sri Lanka's

Robert Winder reports from Lahore on a World Cup final of poetic inevitability

favour. Not that they need help: they play a dashing, risky and brilliantly ambitious game. Not many of their players are well-known in England - Aravinda de Silva has started for Kent last season, and the Kumaras Dharmasena once picked up 160-odd and eight wickets for Reading against Wokingham - but this is because for some reason we hardly ever play them.

Australia know them well enough. When Sri Lanka went down under this winter they were accused of ball-tampering and Muthiah Muralitharan, was repeatedly called for throwing. Neither charge was substantiated, and there was even talk of lawsuit.

Things did not go all that well on the pitch either. Sri Lanka were solidly put in their place in all three Tests and were beaten 2-1 by Australia in the final of the triangular one-day competition, after eliminating the West Indies.

There are few better signs of Australia's present strength than the fact that Michael Slater scored 219 in one of those Tests - but cannot make the team in the World Cup.

Australia also showed, by scraping that extraordinary win against the West Indies on Thursday, that it takes something special to beat them. To be sure, the West Indies suffered a barely credible failure of nerve. But Australia's, even when defeat looked inevitable, did not waver.

Mark Taylor never stopped looking for some way to get a grip on the match, and when Shivaraj Chanderpaul gave him one he hung on like a mongoose. Warne and the West Indian lower order did the rest.

You would have to go a long way, too, to see anything more impressive than the way the Australian middle order (Stuart Law and Michael Bevan) gave themselves something to bowl at after Curly Ambrose and Ian Bishop had ploughed through the first four batters.

The most flattering thing you could say about it was that it was typical. So far as the final is concerned, that with-one-bound-they-were-free victory gives them a useful aura of invincibility. Fleming, for one - having secured the win by bowling Courtney Walsh in the final over - must be dying to get the ball in his hand again.

There is not much doubt that over a sustained series of matches Australia would be strong favourites. But tomorrow's match will not be sustained, and it will probably turn, as most matches involving Sri Lanka now turn, on the first 15 overs of the innings.

The Sri Lankans have added a new dimension to this phase of the game, and have stolen a march on the world. The assault on Kenya was one thing (84 off eight overs) and the crushing of England another.

Mark Taylor never stopped looking for some way to get a grip on the match, and when Shivaraj Chanderpaul gave him one he hung on like a mongoose. Warne and the West Indian lower order did the rest.

But it was the first match against India that showed what could be done. India, led by Sachin Tendulkar's superb 137, accelerated in the traditional way, with 99 off the last 10 overs. Sri Lanka did the opposite, and how. They put on 50 in 4.4 overs, and carried on from there. Manoj Prabhakar's first two cost him 33 and, very possibly, his international career.

No one has ever attacked the new ball with such unrestrained vigour: Sanath Jayasuriya, who got 79 that day, has now been named Most Valuable Player of the Series, and given a smart new car, for making the most of one of sport's oldest ideas - that attack is the best form of defence.

Will it work again? Who knows? Is it possible to play like that against Warne? No one has managed it yet. Is there enough power (there is certainly enough variety) in the Sri Lankan bowling to prevent Taylor and Co from taking them to the cleaners? Is anyone seriously suggesting that Mark Waugh might fail twice in a row? It would not be a final if there were not unanswerable questions such as these.

But it promises to be a real game. Australia have the stronger pedigree, Sri Lanka, perhaps, the more heated desire. Back in September, Sri Lanka were 66-1 outsiders, but by the time the tournament began they were only 8-1. Anyone want to guess what the odds will be after the first five overs of their innings?



Getting a grip: Sri Lanka's Aravinda de Silva fixes his bat yesterday. Photograph: Allsport

This week at the World Cup

Team of the week
1 S R Tendulkar (Ind)
2 S S Chanderpaul (WI)
3 B C Law (WI)
4 P A De Silva (SL)
5 C Z Hossain (BD)
6 S S Lala (Aus)
7 B M McLean (SL)
8 I A Healy (Aus)
9 S K Warne (Aus)
10 W/P/C/L Yousaf (SL)
11 C Ambrose (WI)

Quote of the week
"We won 95 per cent of the games but won the last few percent. Mark Taylor did his team's advertising for us." - Sanath Jayasuriya

Moment of the week
The day the rains died. Instantly in 110,000 throats in Calcutta when Sri Lanka's skipper, Roshan Ranatunga, stamped Sanath Jayasuriya and charged the crowd with a speech that was a stroke of genius.

Lesson of the week
KEITH ARTHURTON
The West Indies middle-order batsmen who ended the tournament with a grand total of two runs (both singles) and three ducks from his 11 matches, demonstrating in a final that Damien Fleming is a crucial moment in the semi-final.

Best batting
1 S Chanderpaul (WI v Aus)
2 I A Healy (Aus v WI)
3 M Waugh (Aus v NZ)
4 N S Singh (SL v Ind v Pk)

Best bowling
1 S R Tendulkar (Ind v WI)
2 S S Chanderpaul (SL v WI)
3 C Z Hossain (SL v WI)
4 B M McLean (SL v WI)

Results
QUARTER-FINALS
SL v Indies (236-5) vs England (235-5) by 2 wickets
SL v WI (259-8) vs Pakistan (249-6) by 2 wickets
WI v Aus (264-9) vs South Africa (245-9) by 19 runs
Australia (220-4) vs New Zealand (206-4) by 14 runs

SEMI-FINALS
SL vs Indies (251-5) vs India (120-8) by 7 wickets (crown robbery)
Australia (227-9) vs West Indies (222) by 25 runs

Statistics
Most runs
Sachin Tendulkar (Ind) 523
Mark Waugh (Aus) 472
Gary Kirsten (SA) 391
Aravinda de Silva (SL) 341
Steve Waugh (Aus) 279

Most wickets
Anil Kumble (Ind) 25
Paul McLean (SL) 24
Paul Stirling (WI) 22
Roger Binny (Aus) 21
Steve Waugh (Aus) 12

Leading wicket-takers
12 Steve Waugh (Aus)
12 Hashim Amla (SA)
12 Michael Bevan (WI)

Most catches
12 Steve Waugh (Aus)
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international

UN targets aid to build a new Africa

DAVID ORR
Nairobi

The United Nations biggest ever campaign for the development of Africa – recognised as “the world's foremost development challenge” – was unveiled amid much fanfare yesterday.

The so-called Special Initiative on Africa was launched by Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the UN Secretary-General, in tandem with the World Bank and UN agencies in Nairobi, Geneva, New York, Paris and Rome.

“Now is the time for the United Nations and international community as a whole to stand together with Africa,” he said. “Now is the time for us to forge a new partnership.

We want today to tell Africa solemnly isn't alone, it isn't abandoned, it is more than ever in the sight of the world ... I'm not appealing to the gen-

erosity of the international community, I'm appealing to its conscience,” he said.

The programme, whose estimated cost over a 10-year period is \$25bn, aims to expand basic education and health care, to promote peace and better governance, and to improve water and food security.

The huge cost of the initiative will have to come from a redirection of existing UN resources and from a readjustment of African governments' often much-criticised spending priorities.

It will also require fresh financing from Western governments equivalent to about 20 per cent of current development aid flows to Africa. The sources of funding, given the UN's current financial difficulties and the pressure on aid budgets, are vague.

Despite the upbeat tone of the initiative, which suggests

that Africa's prospects for economic recovery are better than ever, the continent remains the only one where, on UN measures, poverty is on the rise.

And though its leaders and visiting aid experts never tire of expounding on its abundant promise and potential, Africa has been beset over the past three decades by repeated economic and social crises.

The results of structural adjustment – the ideology of economic management devised by the World Bank and often criticised by African leaders – have been modest and progress has fallen well short of expectations.

The poor, and particularly women and children, have been the first to suffer as governments have sought – often under extreme duress from the donor community – to live within their means.

Africa has been largely left behind as countries in Asia and elsewhere have made better use of their resources and competed more effectively on the world market.

Africa's countries include 22 of the 25 nations identified by the United Nations as having the lowest human development levels in the world, while 33 of the world's 47 least developed countries are African.

Access to such basic services as health care and primary education in Africa remains lower than anywhere else, while population growth and infant mortality levels are higher. It is estimated that by the turn of the century one-third of the world's poor will be living in the African continent.

So at a time when many countries continue to be torn apart by conflict – among them Burundi, Sudan, Somalia – the timing of this new UN endeavour is crucial.



Military manoeuvres: Women training yesterday with the Sudanese Popular Defense Force at Khartoum, outside Khartoum. The militia – optional for women – provides troops to fight against the southern rebels. Photograph: AP

Ethiopians edge back from brink of famine

For the first time the country is almost self-sufficient in food, writes David Orr

Addis Ababa – To many in the West, Ethiopia has become synonymous with the terrible famine of 1984-85, when nearly 1 million people died.

Though its sheer scale has earned it a special place in the annals of human suffering, the Eighties famine is by no means unique in Ethiopia's recent history. In 1973 a drought in the same north-eastern region of the country resulted in the deaths of some 300,000 people.

Again, in 1994, food shortages in the Tigray and Wollo areas killed between 5,000 and 10,000 people.

There are those who believe starvation to be the intermittent but inevitable fate of this part of Africa. Simon Mechale, the man whose unenviable job it is to prevent another famine, is not one of them. But neither is he overly complacent about the future.

“This is the best year in our country for a long time,” Ethiopia's Commissioner for Disaster Prevention and Preparedness, said. “We've had better rain, there's peace and the government has been helping farmers with fertiliser and improved seeds. But this

isolation of 57 million people. Besides, the areas of maximum rainfall do not coincide with the areas of maximum population.

Almost half the inhabitants are judged by the United Nations' World Food Programme (WFP) to be under threat from famine.

“Simply put, people are living where they shouldn't,” Allen Jones, WFP director in Ethiopia, said. “It rains more or less all year round in the west but most of the population is concentrated in the centre, the north and north-east.”

Yet relocation is not the solution it might appear. Around the time of the 1984-85 famine, the regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam, which fell in 1991, tried to shift whole communities from the beleaguered north and north-east.

It was a disaster: people and cattle used to the highlands fell victim to unfamiliar diseases in the lowlands. And there were outbreaks of ethnic unrest as hitherto unacquainted tribes were forced to compete for scarce resources.

The severity of the 1984-85 famine was exacerbated by the rigidly Marxist Mengistu regime and by its cynical use of food as a weapon of war. Food aid was withheld in an attempt to flush rebels out of their highland strongholds.

Five years of relative peace coupled with the reintroduction of a market economy by the government of Meles Zenawi have helped boost agricultural production. These factors, combined with the good rains of last year, have conspired to make the country, for the first time in recent memory, almost self-sufficient in food.

In the past decade or so Ethiopia needed about 600,000 tonnes of food aid a year. That amounts to an average spending of £80m a year on food aid. But the bulk of the 125,000 tonnes needed this year will be purchased in Ethiopia.

Yet Ethiopia remains one of the poorest countries: per capita income is estimated at less than £75 per annum.

Ethiopia is extremely vulnerable, Mr Jones said. “In times of drought, the people don't have enough cattle to sell to tide them over. A man can't just go out and pawn his wife's jewellery, because she hasn't got any. People don't have much access to jobs; the vast majority just scratch a living from the land.”

Nevertheless, there are signs that the situation is improving. The 1994 drought endangered just as many people as were affected a decade earlier, yet the death-toll was much lower.

The difference was that in 1994 the relief mechanisms were in place. The government, the UN and non-governmental organisations were able to act quickly, implementing a pre-agreed plan and drawing on massive food reserves at strategic locations.

To a certain extent we have control over the human elements: what sort of government we have, whether there's war or peace, whether we're implementing the correct agricultural policies,” Mr Mechale, an economist with a degree from Bradford University, said. “But if the rain doesn't come, there's nothing we can do.”

Among the government's disaster-prevention schemes is a plan to lessen the country's dependence on rainfall by utilising rivers, which an official report has said could be harnessed to develop nearly 6 million acres through irrigation.

The underlying problem is that population growth is outstripping agricultural production and the land is simply not fertile enough to support a popula-



Mengistu: Ruthlessly used food as a weapon of war

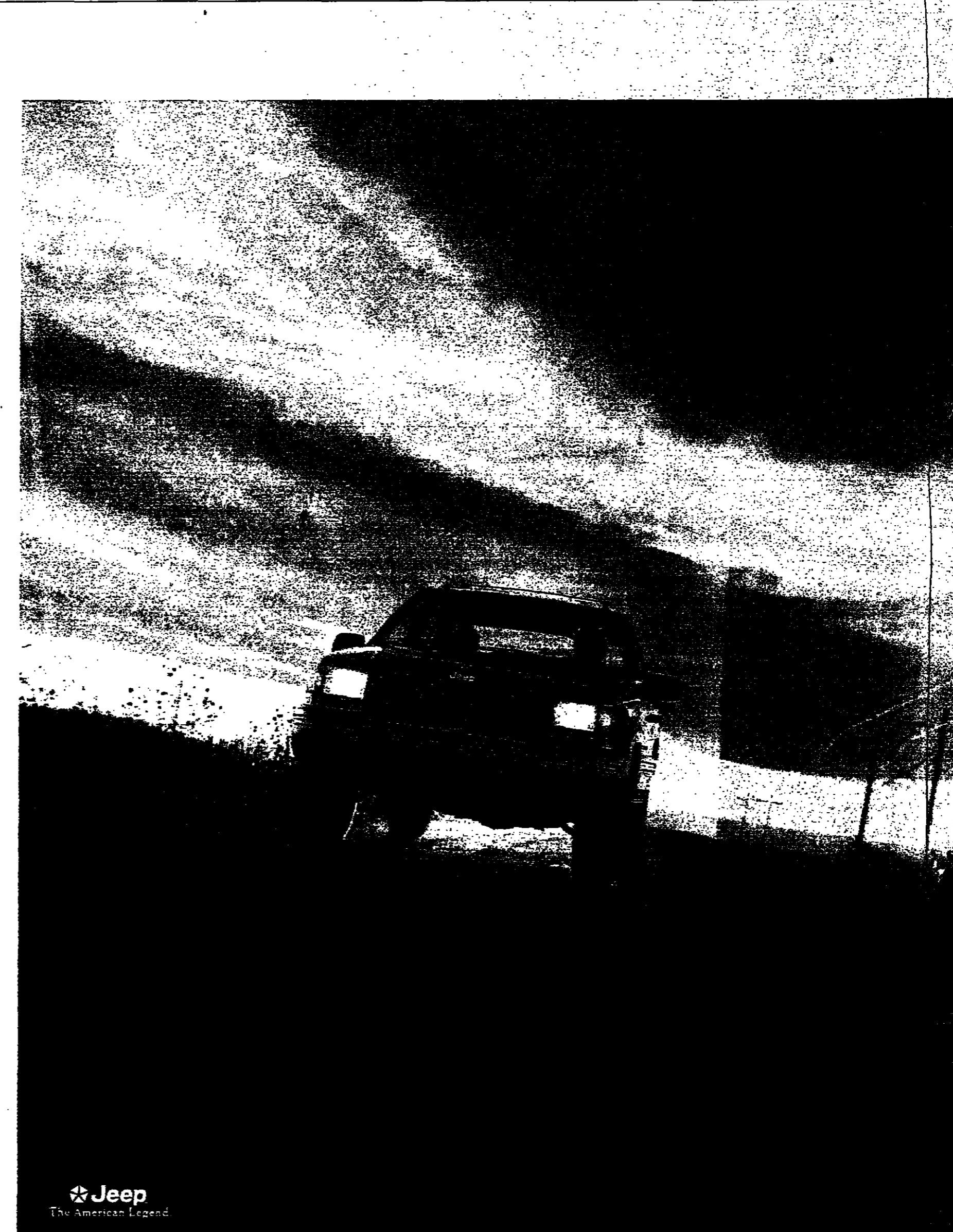
doesn't mean there's no problem. We still need food aid for 2.5 million people this year.

Ethiopia is one of the most famine-prone countries on Earth. There is a food shortage here every year, a crisis about once a decade. With proper management it is usually possible – as it should be this year – to prevent people dying from starvation. But the threat of disaster is constant and it is likely that the country's food aid needs will continue to grow rather than diminish.

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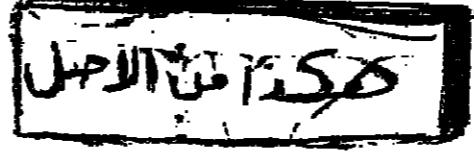
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When you hear the gossip, the internecine feuds from the participants themselves, you think: 'How can 11 players ever play together?'

As cows who have landed in clover go, Rory McGrath is at present up to his neck in it, wallowing about in sheer, ruddy joy. McGrath is one of the centre of the funniest programmes on television, the sports quiz *They Think It's All Over*: he's the hirsute one, who Nick Hancock - a quiz master so ride he makes Jeremy Paxman look deferential - recently likened to Michael Jackson's chimp; he's the one who, since the series took off, has found himself constantly having inquiries thrown at him from members of the public as he goes about his daily business.

"And," he said, "it's always the same question: 'What's Gary Lineker really like?'"

This, in a sense, is the pleasure at the heart of the programme: watching your sporting heroes in another

context, thinking that you are getting closer to their real selves, in particular seeing them as the butt of robust humour.

"They don't seem used to it," McGrath said. "If you tell David Gower often enough that he was a crap cricketer, he usually ends up saying, 'Yeah, I suppose you're right.'"

McGrath himself, a season ticket holder at Arsenal, has been as goggle-eyed with the excitement at meeting his heroes as any 10-year-old waiting with an autograph book outside Highbury.

"The other night," he said, "we were in the hospitality room and Gary - I'm allowed to call him Gary now - said: 'Listen, Rory, Ian Wright's about to arrive so, calm down, take a deep breath and compose yourself.' Then Ian Wright walked in and shook my hand.

Then Sharron Davies strolled in. It was... a feast."

The laddish enthusiasm which McGrath, Hancock and Lee Hurst (so bald, according to Hancock, that he reminds people of their mums: their Mum roll-on deodorant) go about their business is transparent. An enthusiasm which extends to major sessions in the hospitality lounge after recording.

"The fun thing for me and Nick is sitting around talking football with people who were there. What you get through the papers is very sanitised, when you get to hear the gossip, the internecine feuds from the participants themselves, you think: 'How can 11 players ever play together?'

A question which would have occurred to an Arsenal season ticket holder, you might have thought, without the benefit of inside knowledge. Who

for instance, wants to know what Jimmy Mulville gets up to when they can learn instead that Lucinda Green, making a guest appearance in the programme's brilliant "Feel The Sportsman" slot, specifically asked that McGrath didn't feel her.

"She didn't mind Gary - touching her," the snubbed McGrath said. "But she wanted a girl to be the other person to feel her. And the girl was Jo Brand, which was a bit ironic in itself."

Or who wants to hear about Griff Rhys Jones's personal habits when they can be told that Will Carling has, on several occasions he has been invited onto the programme, pulled out at the last moment. "But then he's been doing a lot of that recently."

And who wants to know about what Dawn and Jennifer said the other night when they can instead be told

that Gary Lineker, the saintly one himself, cheats as a matter of course. "Gower isn't that fussed, but Lineker is desperate to win, so he's quite happy to cheat. It started when I took a mate round the studio before a recording and saw Nick's script on the auto-cue giving the answer to a question. I got back to the dressing-room and told Gary, who just repeated the answer on the show straight-faced. Then I got hold of the cards with the sportsmen's names on before one edition. I wrote a list and put it on the desk between us so Gary was able to just read the names off. I suppose that counts as cheating."

Then there was the blindfold incident. "It back-fired badly; I said to Gary: let's punch holes in the blindfolds for *Feel The Sportsman*. But they wouldn't let us have the blindfolds beforehand. So we took a needle on set.

After that, it really was all over.

Montgomerie lurks with intent

Golf

ANDREW FARRELL
reports from Dubai

It has taken just two days for the name of Colin Montgomerie to lurk menacingly on the leader board. The fact that he is tied for second place (alongside Jay Townsend) will make Miguel Jimenez's four-shot lead appear, rather like the Scotsman himself, less weighty than it otherwise would.

Jimenez and Montgomerie both shot 68s in the second round of the Dubai Desert Classic yesterday, but the Spaniard's 13-under 131 score is no guarantee of victory. Montgomerie was on the same mark at half-way last year, only to lose by three to Fred Couples.

Couples can do unwriteable things in the species of complete sentences, but the odd phrase hits the mark. "Colin is always semi-impressive," he said. "Today was pretty impressive. He looked like he had been playing (regularly)."

This is the European No 1's first event of the year. "It is beyond my expectations to be in contention, but I haven't had a challenge for three months and

I'm quite confident for the weekend," Montgomerie said. "I have missed the competition. I'd be competitive in any business. I'm fortunate to have found a career where the rewards satisfy my competitive nature."

Of his five birdies, the one at the par-five 13th was the result of deliberately hitting a two-iron into a greenside bunker and then splashing out to four feet. Today, a tradition, that has seen Montgomerie and Couples paired together for six successive rounds, will be broken. The American had a chance to get to nine under and continue the run, that started at last year's tournament with an eagle at the last.

Couples had a three-wood shot from 221 yards over water and tried to hit a high cut into the wind. "If I had hit that anywhere but in the water, it would have been a good day," he said. With his next ball, he hit a wedge shot to four feet but missed the putt. A bogey left him on six under, level with Ian Woosnam.

Jimenez, in telephone communication with his brother and coach Juan back in Torre-quebrada, had birdies at the first three holes to open up his lead. He missed four good chances on the back nine, but was

unconcerned. "I left a few birdies on the course, but if I continue to play like this, I've got a chance," he said.

After being one behind overnight, Townsend, could not keep pace with a 71. Even if he wins the huge team trophy, his luggage will not be the 100 kilos overweight. It was when leaving the South African leg of the tour. After a week's holiday hunting on the bushveld, the heads of a water buck and a wildebeest were in transport to his local Florida taxidermist.

Still with us for the weekend is Seve Ballesteros. The out-of-
Spain, who bogeyed the last two holes on Thursday, finished with two birdies yesterday to have the luxury of making the cut with a shot to spare.

■ Nick Faldo forfeited two shots in his opening round of 72 in the Bay Hill Invitational tournament in Orlando on Thursday when he failed to replace his ball in the correct position on the fourth green after moving his marker out of Jim McGovern's line. Faldo lost two shots at the Open in 1994 when he mistook only hit McGovern's ball out of rough. "Jim must think I'm an airhead. He's my double-bogey man," Faldo said.

SPORTING DIGEST

Cricket

YONEX ALL-ENGLAND CHAMPIONSHIPS (Division One, Indoor Arenas, Birmingham) Men's division: 1. Nottinghamshire (100); 2. Warwickshire (92); 3. Leicestershire (89); 4. Lancashire (88); 5. Middlesex (86); 6. Essex (85); 7. Kent (84); 8. Gloucestershire (83); 9. Northamptonshire (82); 10. Nottinghamshire (81); 11. Warwickshire (80); 12. Leicestershire (79); 13. Lancashire (78); 14. Nottinghamshire (77); 15. Gloucestershire (76); 16. Warwickshire (75); 17. Lancashire (74); 18. Nottinghamshire (73); 19. Gloucestershire (72); 20. Warwickshire (71); 21. Lancashire (70); 22. Nottinghamshire (69); 23. Gloucestershire (68); 24. Warwickshire (67); 25. Lancashire (66); 26. Nottinghamshire (65); 27. Gloucestershire (64); 28. Warwickshire (63); 29. Lancashire (62); 30. Nottinghamshire (61); 31. Gloucestershire (60); 32. Warwickshire (59); 33. Lancashire (58); 34. Nottinghamshire (57); 35. Gloucestershire (56); 36. Warwickshire (55); 37. Lancashire (54); 38. Nottinghamshire (53); 39. Gloucestershire (52); 40. Warwickshire (51); 41. Lancashire (50); 42. Nottinghamshire (49); 43. Gloucestershire (48); 44. Warwickshire (47); 45. Lancashire (46); 46. Nottinghamshire (45); 47. Gloucestershire (44); 48. Warwickshire (43); 49. Lancashire (42); 50. Nottinghamshire (41); 51. Gloucestershire (40); 52. Warwickshire (39); 53. Lancashire (38); 54. Nottinghamshire (37); 55. Gloucestershire (36); 56. Warwickshire (35); 57. Lancashire (34); 58. Nottinghamshire (33); 59. Gloucestershire (32); 60. Warwickshire (31); 61. Lancashire (30); 62. Nottinghamshire (29); 63. Gloucestershire (28); 64. Warwickshire (27); 65. Lancashire (26); 66. Nottinghamshire (25); 67. Gloucestershire (24); 68. Warwickshire (23); 69. Lancashire (22); 70. Nottinghamshire (21); 71. Gloucestershire (20); 72. Warwickshire (19); 73. Lancashire (18); 74. Nottinghamshire (17); 75. Gloucestershire (16); 76. Warwickshire (15); 77. Lancashire (14); 78. Nottinghamshire (13); 79. Gloucestershire (12); 80. Warwickshire (11); 81. Lancashire (10); 82. Nottinghamshire (9); 83. Gloucestershire (8); 84. Warwickshire (7); 85. Lancashire (6); 86. Nottinghamshire (5); 87. Gloucestershire (4); 88. Warwickshire (3); 89. Lancashire (2); 90. Nottinghamshire (1).

Cycling

YONEX ALL-ENGLAND CHAMPIONSHIPS (European Clubs) (Division One, Indoor Arenas, Birmingham) Men's division: 1. CSKA Moscow (100); 2. Paris (92); 3. Aigues (89); 4. Western (88); 5. B. (87); 6. B. (86); 7. Paris (85); 8. CSKA Moscow (84); 9. B. (83); 10. Paris (82); 11. B. (81); 12. Paris (80); 13. B. (79); 14. Paris (78); 15. B. (77); 16. Paris (76); 17. B. (75); 18. Paris (74); 19. B. (73); 20. Paris (72); 21. B. (71); 22. Paris (70); 23. B. (69); 24. Paris (68); 25. B. (67); 26. Paris (66); 27. B. (65); 28. Paris (64); 29. B. (63); 30. Paris (62); 31. B. (61); 32. Paris (60); 33. B. (59); 34. Paris (58); 35. B. (57); 36. Paris (56); 37. B. (55); 38. Paris (54); 39. B. (53); 40. Paris (52); 41. B. (51); 42. Paris (50); 43. B. (49); 44. Paris (48); 45. B. (47); 46. Paris (46); 47. B. (45); 48. Paris (44); 49. B. (43); 50. Paris (42); 51. B. (41); 52. Paris (40); 53. B. (39); 54. Paris (38); 55. B. (37); 56. Paris (36); 57. B. (35); 58. Paris (34); 59. B. (33); 60. Paris (32); 61. B. (31); 62. Paris (30); 63. B. (29); 64. Paris (28); 65. B. (27); 66. Paris (26); 67. B. (25); 68. Paris (24); 69. B. (23); 70. Paris (22); 71. B. (21); 72. Paris (20); 73. B. (19); 74. Paris (18); 75. B. (17); 76. Paris (16); 77. B. (15); 78. Paris (14); 79. B. (13); 80. Paris (12); 81. B. (11); 82. Paris (10); 83. B. (9); 84. Paris (8); 85. B. (7); 86. Paris (6); 87. B. (5); 88. Paris (4); 89. B. (3); 90. Paris (2); 91. B. (1); 92. Paris (0).

Billiards

WORLD MATCHPLAY CHAMPIONSHIP (Ballymena) Quarter-finals: R. H. Phillips (Eng) 9-5; D. Chapman (Eng) 9-6; S. Gandy (Eng) 9-2; D. C. Doherty (Eng) 9-0.

Boxing

Scotland's Paul Weller has been given the chance to regain the World Boxing Organisation light-heavyweight title from Emanuele Lucchini of Italy. Weller, 26, is the supporting bill for Emanuele Lucchini's defence of his WBO welterweight title against Jorge Luis Lopez of Mexico. Weller, 26, is 10-0 (9 KOs) and Lucchini, 26, is 11-1 (10 KOs). The fight is at the 10,000-seat Empire Stadium, Glasgow, on Saturday, 23 March. Paul Weller will take on Scotland's Stephen Wilson for the vacant WBO inter-continental super-middleweight title.

THE INDEPENDENT

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sport

Eight steps on the road to Las Vegas

When Frank Bruno steps into the ring against Mike Tyson in Las Vegas in the early hours of tomorrow morning it will be exactly 14 years since he made his professional debut.

Nick Halling looks back on the key contests of his career

Right hand starts renaissance

March 17th 1982 British heavyweight boxing was in a moribund state 14 years ago. The little known Nevil Meade was the reigning British champion, having won the title the year before against one Gordon Ferris. Meade would lose his title a year later to the equally obscure David Pearce.

However the division was set for a revival. In East London, the prospects of the Algerian-born Funso Banjo were being touted by his many supporters. The 32-year-old Joe Bugner was preparing for the third of many returns from inactivity. And Frank Bruno, in his first professional contest, was top of the bill at the Royal Albert Hall, already widely hailed as a potential world champion.

Bruno's potential had first come to light in 1980, when he won the Amateur Boxing Association heavyweight title. However, his professional career had almost run aground before it had taken off when Bruno failed his British Boxing Board of Control medical with an eye problem.

Terry Lawless, who had fought out Bruno's first manager, Burt McCarthy, paid for his young hopeful to have surgery in Colombia to repair a weakness in the peripheral vision in his right eye. The operation was a success and Bruno was granted a licence on his return to Britain.

Bruno's first opponent was the hapless Lupe Guerra, who subsided inside a round at the first sign of hostilities. Bruno had clearly been the beneficiary of the over-cautious matchmaking which would characterise much of his early career, but in retrospect, the right hand that ended Guerra's resistance marked the start of a domestic heavyweight renaissance.

Well-timed punch reveals vulnerability

Oct 11th 1983 Aided by the ever-watchful Lawless, Bruno had disposed of 18 carefully selected opponents in just 40 painfully one-sided rounds by the time he faced Floyd "Jumbo" Cummings at the Albert Hall. His world title aspirations appeared genuine, while his engaging personality meant he was on the way to supplanting Henry Cooper as the nation's favourite pugilist.

There seemed little to fear when the mouthy, confident Cummings swaggered into the ring. Cummings had recently boxed Joe Frazier to a draw, but the old champion was a pale imitation of the thrilling warrior of the Seventies.

However, Cummings was known to possess a clubbing left hook and when it landed flush to the side of Bruno's jaw at the end of round three the Londoner was in genuine distress. The shot landed as the bell sounded, which was just as well for Bruno, who stood transfixed, head bowed, unable to move or defend himself.

Lawless raced from the corner to guide his stricken charge back to the safety of his stool. The minute's rest was sufficient, because although Cummings launched wave upon wave of crude attacks, Bruno managed to survive, eventually halting the spent American in the seventh.

Bruno was afforded a standing ovation as he returned to his dressing-room; he had survived his first crisis, but Cummings had exposed a lack of mobility and, more pertinently, Bruno's vulnerability under the impact of a well-timed punch.

Squeezed out by 'Bonecrusher'

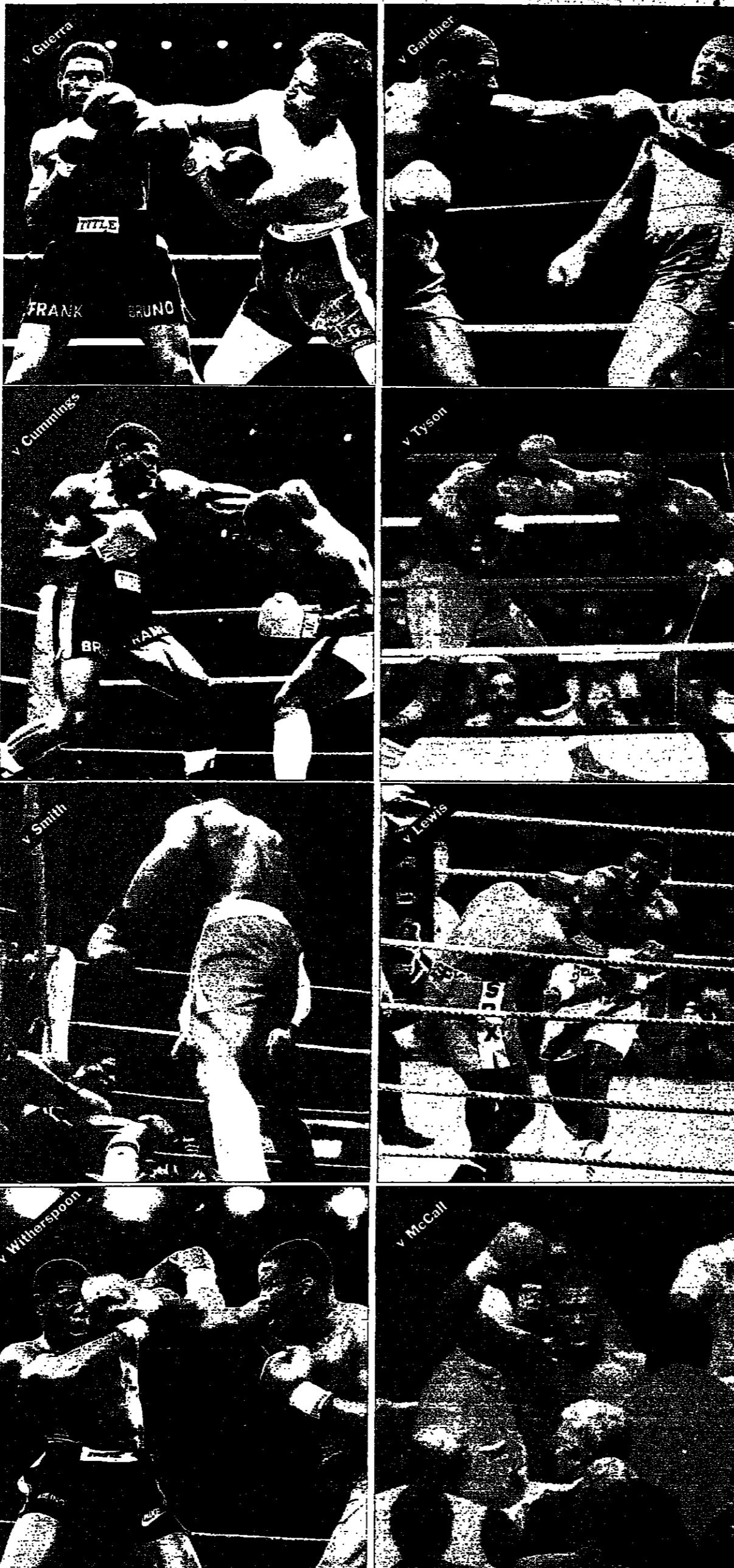
May 13th 1984 Two more knock-out victories after the Cummings fight enabled Bruno to set up a contest with James "Bonecrusher" Smith, an unofficial eliminator for the world title held by Larry Holmes. Little was known of Smith in Britain, although his reputation across the Atlantic suggested a capable opponent who could both withstand and administer punishment.

For nine rounds the Londoner produced the best boxing of his career to open up an unassailable points lead. However, in the 10th and final round, Smith finally caught his man. As with Cummings, Bruno seemed incapable of comprehending what had happened, remaining upright as Smith unseated. Lawless insists the American landed 27 unanswered punches before Bruno went down for the full count, his first loss in 22 contests.

After a brave challenge against Holmes, Smith would go on to win the World Boxing Association version of the title before taking Mike Tyson the distance. Bruno appeared too fragile to mix in such company.

Witherspoon doles out punishment

July 19th 1986 In the first of his four assaults on the world title, Bruno was matched with Tim Witherspoon, the reigning World Boxing Association champion. It seemed he had recovered from his beating against Smith, having won the European title (Bruno never fought for the British championship) and then



Quotes of the week

I think that at any other ground in the country the two of us have been given. Gareth Le Tissier, the Southampton player, on Neil Shipperley's disallowed effort against Manchester United in the FA Cup.

I said to the players at half-time, make it more entertaining. Let Liverpool play and let us all go home happy. Leeds manager Howard Wilkinson's sarcastic response to criticism of his side's negative tactics against Liverpool in the FA Cup semi-final.

John (Brunell) was dead, David Coulthard on the crash at last Sunday's Australian Grand Prix.

It hurts when people get the idea that I'm some kind of pantomime freak. Frank Bruno, who defeated his world title opponent, Mike Tyson tonight.

Players lives cannot be put at risk for a game of cricket. I would not have wanted that on my conscience. Clive Lloyd, the former West Indies captain who called off the Sri Lanka India World Cup semi-final following a not out.

If he beats Mike Tyson, it's the equivalent of England winning the World Cup in 1966 without a doubt, the biggest thing for British sport. I can think of a thing to beat it. Bruno's manager, Frank Warren.

Some needs their bottom spanked. The cloth like a whip, it's good to bring down the standard of play. The world snooker champion, Stephen Hendry, criticises the playing tables at the Thailand Open.

You can't stop boys going out with girls, particularly when they are single, so as far as other spectators are concerned, any Manchester City player involved would have to go down the road. Francis Lee, the City chairman, after Nicky Sumpter was the target of news media and fan allegations.

I need to know what the wicket is like, what batting is like and the number of over left. Glenn Hoddle, the Chelsea manager, uses a cricket analogy to back up his position at Stamford Bridge.

My beliefs are more important than anything. If I have to give up basketball, I will. The country has a long history of [oppression]. I don't care if it's God or for an oppressor. It's clear in the Koran, Islam is the only way. Abdul-Rauf, a devout Moslem and key member of the Denver Nuggets team, who did not stand during the American national anthem at a recent NBA game.

Naseem Hamed is a man in a hurry as he prepares his first defence of the World Boxing Organisation featherweight title against Nigeria's Said Lawal at the Scottish Exhibition Centre in Glasgow tonight.

A damaged right hand kept Hamed out of action for nearly six months after he took the title from Steve Robinson in Cardiff. Now the 22-year-old Sheffield showman, who says his hand is fine, aims to make up for lost time. He predicts victory in two rounds and has set himself an outrageous task of winning three more world titles before the end of the year.

Tom Johnson, the International Boxing Federation champion from the United States, is his first target. Mexico's WBO super-bantamweight holder, Mexico's Antonio Barreca is another.

The Prince is ready to take

over British boxing again. I can't wait to be back in the ring," Hamed said. "I'm so strong and fit, the weight is great and the buzz I'm getting is tremendous. I don't say things I can't achieve."

Hamed was at ringside in Newcastle a fortnight ago when Johnson survived an early knock-down to force a last-round stoppage for a 10th title win. "I wasn't impressed. He's getting a bit old and looks rather chinny," Hamed added.

"I've been watching tapes of Barrera and he is probably the best in the two divisions. But if he comes in with his face, he's tailor-made for me. My power is not of super-bantam or feather. I'm punching harder than either of those two weights."

Hamed, going for his 21st successive win, dismisses Lawal's chances on the basis of two blemishes on a 19-fight record.

The 26-year-old Austrian-based challenger lost and drew with Freddy Cruz, who Hamed beat in six rounds in 1994.

"I gave Cruz such a beating that he couldn't wait to get out of the ring," Hamed said. "Lawal is a bit further up than mediocre but has never boxed anyone of my standard. I've two rounds in my head and I'm sticking with that. It will be quick, so don't blink."

The only question mark concerns the hand. Is it really right? Doubts have been expressed in some quarters.

Joe Bugner will continue his 30-year career in Berlin tonight hoping to preserve his remote chance a re-match with Frank Bruno. The Australian-based Bugner, 46, challenges Britain's Scott Welch for the World Boxing Organisation inter-continental heavyweight title.

disposed of a former world champion, Gerrie Coetzee, inside of around.

Witherspoon arrived at Wembley in dispute with his promoter, Don King, amid rumours that he was disillusioned with his profession. With the advantages of a home crowd and an uninterested opponent, the oddsmakers favoured the Londoner.

For 10 rounds Bruno looked a safe bet, picking off the man from Philadelphia with a stream of accurate jabs. In the 11th, however, Witherspoon seemed to tire of it all. A crashing right hand caught Bruno cold, the challenger eventually wilting in a neutral corner under a searing barrage. Once again, Bruno's inability to cope in a crisis had found him out.

Low point reached in absurd mismatch

June 27th 1987 In some respects, this was the low point of Bruno's career. The Briton found himself matched against Chuck Gardner in a bizarre open-air promotion in Cannes. Bald, overweight and with no record to speak of, Gardner clearly did not belong in the same ring as a genuine contender.

It looked a mismatch, it proved to be an embarrassment. Bruno disposed of his woeful rival inside a round. Critics came from all sides, including the BBC, which had been a loyal follower from the beginning. Even the general public, for whom Bruno could do little wrong, were less than impressed.

Champion shaken but not disturbed

Feb 25th 1989 Bruno's second attempt at the world title saw him matched against the man he faces again in Las Vegas tonight. At the time Mike Tyson was the most feared fighter in the world and a man who looked certain to dominate the heavyweight division for years to come.

Tyson put his rival down inside the first few seconds, as the contest threatened to become an embarrassment. Bruno, however, composed himself and towards the end of the round landed a left hook which stopped the young champion in his tracks. Bruno hesitated, Tyson recovered and the moment was lost.

There was no questioning Bruno's bravery, but in the end the fight became a typically one-sided affair. Bruno sustained a tough beating before being rescued by the referee at round five. For the only time in his career, he had been thoroughly out-classed.

Lewis prevails in battle of Britons

Oct 1st 1993 The Tyson fight proved to be Bruno's last under the stewardship of Terry Lawless. Bruno went into retirement for more than two years, while enjoying a new career in pantomime and the light entertainment industry.

When he emerged in 1991, self-managed, he signed a promotional deal with Mickey Duff which resulted in a third assault on the world crown. Boxing is a type business, but there was nothing fake about the mutual dislike between Bruno and his fellow Briton Lennox Lewis.

Before an open-air crowd in Cardiff, Bruno gave a composed and competent account of himself for six rounds, before Lewis connected with a wild left hook in the seventh. Bruno's head and hands dropped; Lewis pressed home his advantage and Bruno was rescued by the referee. The weakness first exposed by "Jumbo" Cummings a decade earlier had thwarted him again.

Fall of McCall finally ends the odyssey

Sept 22nd 1995 Lewis would lose his title to Oliver McCall, an American heavyweight promoted by Don King, King's partner in Britain's Frank Warren, who had survived a shooting to return to promotional pre-eminence. After the stand-off between Bruno and Warren, confident the connection would lead to a match with McCall.

Warren also enjoys a relationship with British Sky Broadcasting, a significant factor given that the BBC had decided to terminate its interests in Bruno after a meaningless first-round defeat of Jesse Ferguson following the loss of Lewis.

Bruno was duly granted his wish and at an emotional Wembley stadium built up a healthy points lead. McCall ended the stronger, but unlike Smith, Witherspoon, Tyson and Lewis, failed to find a finish. After a career spanning 13 years, 44 contests and four title attempts, Bruno was a world heavyweight champion no more.

Photographs: Alastair Entwistle, PA, Daily Mirror

Hamed has big plans

Clubs gamble on fight

MIKE ROWBOTTOM

rugby union player, Victor Ubogu, has been unable to gain a licence extension for a fifth year, not aware of any pub that has got an extension for a live showing," said Tim Hanson, spokesman for the Brewers and Licence Retailers' Association.

The route remains open, however, for private parties to be held. Carl Spires, landlord of The Tanners Arms in Bishop's Stortford, is inviting around 30 regulars, who have paid for drinks up front, to see the fight live.

"It was a tricky decision from a business point of view, but Spires's background as a former amateur boxer in Tottenham tipped the balance," he said. "I hope to break even," he said. "But I think Sky are taking the mick. I already pay £70 per month, and I've had to lay out another £120 just for one fight. If they try this again, I'm out."

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FIVE NATIONS' CHAMPIONSHIP



sport

Captain Carling embarks on final voyage

STEVE BALE

Rugby Union Correspondent

If elements among the Twickenham crowd have been equivocal about some of the rugby England have played this season, even the grumpiest curmudgeon among this afternoon's 78,000-strong host will scarcely forbear to cheer Will Carling when he stands for the last time at the helm against Ireland.

A nautical metaphor is appropriate for a season in which England, even though they can end it with a Triple Crown, have sailed through persistently turbulent waters. Jack Rowell, their manager, has been careful to say in his defence that he warned the Rugby Football Union it would be so, but he never thought it would be quite like this.

The question Rowell cannot

fairly answer, because he is a partial witness, is what constitutes a good season for England, the difficulty being that even when three-fifths of the team are first-season initiates the public expectation appears to be worse than ever. But however unreasonable, England – management and players – should take this as a compliment.

"I thought if we lost at Murrayfield and beat Ireland this could have been a reasonable season; that's my genuine view on where this rebuilding season is," Rowell remarked.

His intention is that England will never again be confronted with such a one-off turnover of players as has occurred this season.

"If we are going to blood new people in the team there should be one or two a year," he added. "This year there were six or seven, getting on for half a team that's new, and that's why I'm

however presumptuous aspects of their supporters' conduct may have been, and it is entirely possible if not probable that this post-World Cup period of rapid reconstruction will England for further post-Carling years of success. In that circumstance, the Triple Crown is an agreeable, but optional, extra.

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ENGLAND v IRELAND

ENGLAND	at Twickenham	One
M Catt	Bath 15 S Mason	One
J Stooke	Bath 14 S Geoghegan	One
W Carling	Harlequins, cast 12 M Field	Malone
R Guscoff	Bath 12 J Bell	Northampton
P Grayson	Leicester 11 N Woods	Blackrock College
M Dawson	Northampton 10 D Humphreys	London Irish
G Rowtree	Leicester 9 N Hogan	University College, cast
M Regan	Bristol 1 N Pospisil	Newcastle
J Leonard	Harlequins 2 A Clarke	Northampton
M Johnson	Leicester 4 G Fletcher	Blackrock College
L Dallaglio	Bristol 5 J Davidson	Dunedin
D Richards	Leicester 6 D Corry	Constitution
B Clarke	Bath 7 D McBride	Wasps

Replacements: 16 J Catt (Bath), 17 P Bell (Bath), 18 K Bradshaw (Owen), 19 B Glindie (Bath), 20 D Dawson (Bath), 21 T Rodger (Northampton).

Referee: E Murray (Scotsman).

very pleased with the way they've worked through the season."

This should not be regarded as special pleading on England's

behalf. With their gigantic player base they do not need or deserve any, and begging Ireland's pardon, however callow

they are going to do something about it. That's when they are very dangerous."

Carling and others among the seniors whose England careers are inevitably on the wane need no reminding of this. Two years ago presumption of English victory was as easy to make as it is now and only Geoghegan, Field, Popplewell and McBride survived from the Irishmen who inflicted Carling's only Five Nations defeat at Twickenham.

This is how the Irish prefer it, even if the relentless end-of-season playing of their chances by their manager, Pat Whelan, has seemed ever so slightly exaggerated. Man for man Ireland hardly compare but it was ever thus and England's great shortcomings this season – and even, arguably, against Scotland – has been that the whole has been less than the sum of the parts.

So for Rowell this is a game

that is best approached in trepidation, a mood not lightened

when Mike Catt limped out of

the Welsh on their return to

Dublin. Curiously Murray

Kidd, the New Zealander

whose coaching contract is up

for renewal after this match,

he said: "No doubt they will

come out against England feeling

second-favourites and feel

from the Paris mismatch.

Five Nations Table					
1 Scotland	1	P	W	D	L
2 France	3	2	0	1	6
3 England	3	2	0	1	51
4 Ireland	3	1	0	2	78
5 Wales	3	0	0	3	46

Results: 20 Jan France 15 England 12; Ireland 10 Scotland 16; 3 Feb England 14; 21 Feb Scotland 16; 22 Feb Ireland 19 France 14; 23 Feb France 45 Ireland 10; Wales 12; Scotland 16; 2 March Scotland 9 England 12; Ireland 18; 19 March Wales 17.

Bravura juniors show seniors how to attack

England A

Ireland A

silence as well as a keen eye for counter-attack which produced glorious long-range scores by Conor O'Shea and Richard Wallace. Wallace later added a second and Neil Francis concluded proceedings by galloping 30 yards.

But if anything, their defeat could have been worse and it was impressive to witness an England side containing only one full international, Paul Hull (three caps), so comfortably subduing opponents whose seven capped players including such old hands as Francis, Eric Elwood and Wallace, the latter a Lions wing.

England have long since given up picking people of such vintages for such a fixture, a policy that is reaping a rich reward in the developmental terms Rowell keeps going on about. The senior team's manager particularly enjoyed the gaudaboot performances of the prop Darren Garforth with his two tries. Likewise Tim Stimpson, Adebayo Adebayo and the superbly dynamic duo of Gomersall and King.

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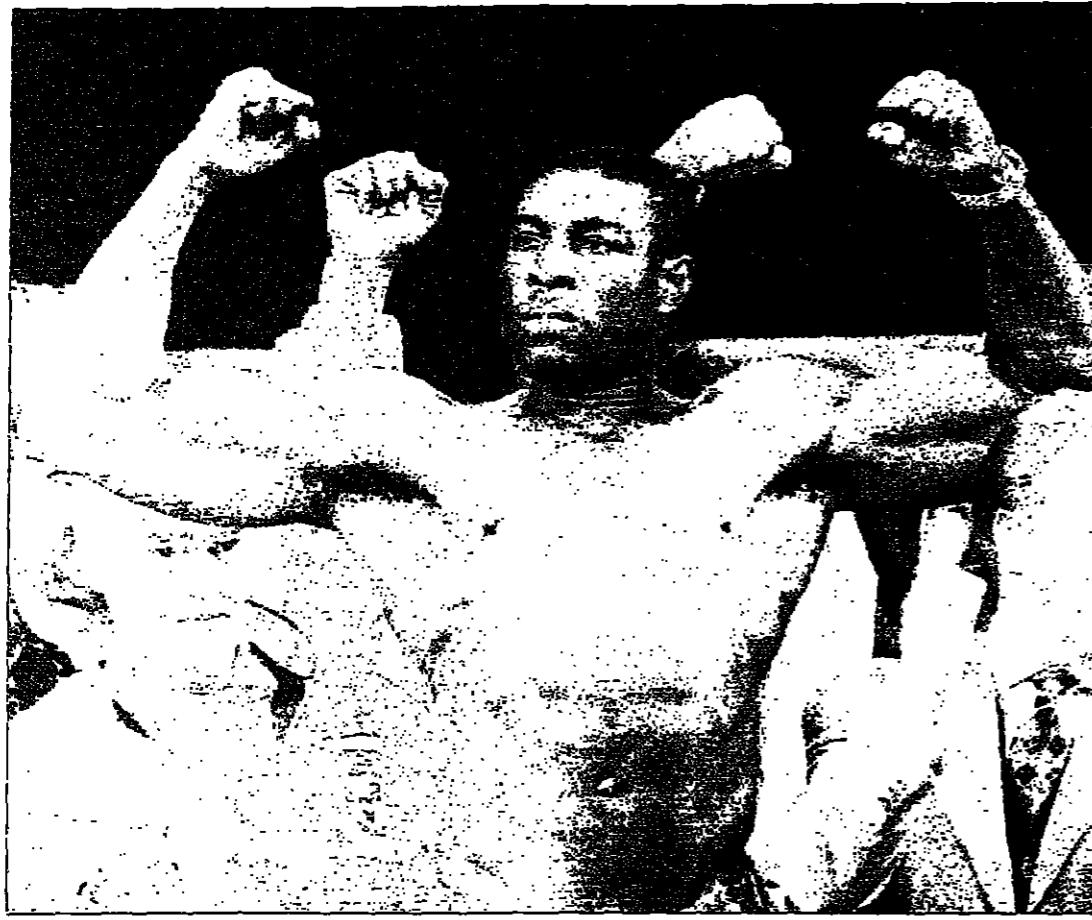
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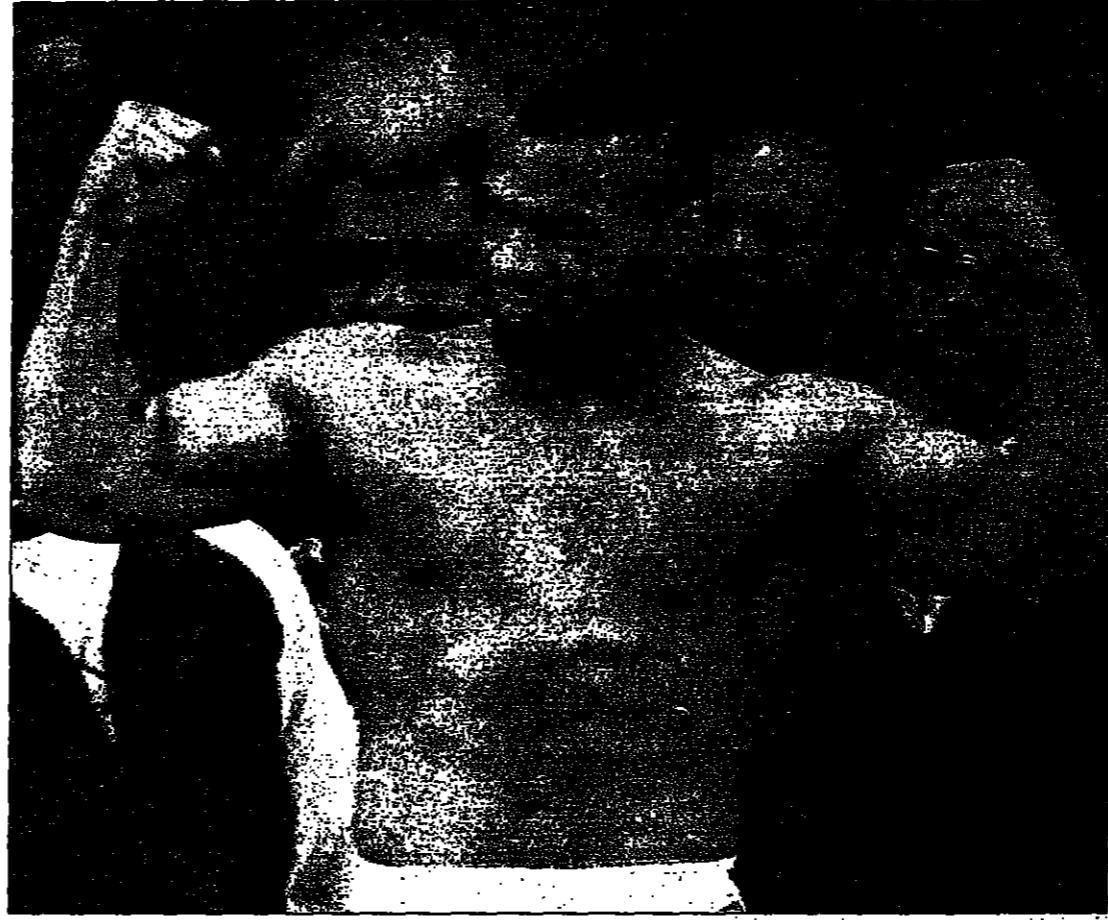
Can England deliver in Carling's last game in charge? Page 31

WORLD HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP: British title holder ready to exploit any decline in past master's powers

Bruno's confidence gains support



Measuring up: Frank Bruno (left) and Mike Tyson at yesterday's weigh-in for their World Boxing Council heavyweight title fight in Las Vegas



Photographs: Reuter

KEN JONES
reports from Las Vegas

Leaving the stage after weighing in for the defence of his World Boxing Council heavyweight championship against Mike Tyson tonight in Las Vegas, towering above the odds-on challenger, Frank Bruno paused to acknowledge the support of a large British contingent.

In response to the shouts of a raucous bunch who been behaving boorishly in the manner of inebriated football supporters, booing Tyson's appearance on the scales, Bruno raised his right forefinger.

None could be sure what the champion meant by this gesture, whether he was indicating an intention to terminate tonight's proceedings or merely calling for better order, but dramatic victory was immediately inferred. A cheer went up and hundreds chanted Bruno's name unaware that lawyers representing Lennox Lewis were bringing an action in a New Jersey court yesterday in an attempt to invalidate the contest on the grounds that Lewis not Tyson was the legitimate challenger.

Unfamiliar with demonstrations of faith, Tyson looked back bleakly over his left shoulder. "He doesn't look the part, slack somehow," an American trainer, Beau Williford, said.

The chief change in Tyson since his release from prison last year is that he no longer looks intimidatingly confident. In the opinion of most he will defeat Bruno and is a clear favourite in the betting, but doubts linger.

They spring from thoughts of the challenger's claimed spiritual awakening, his unconcealed frustration. "I try to do my best but I always fall short of the mark," he said this week.

A factor vital to the initial spectacular phase of Tyson's career was the conviction that nobody could withstand his grim purpose, his refined ferocity. Opponents trembled visibly in his presence, beaten before they entered the ring.

Interestingly, the first evidence of decline came with Tyson's defeat of Bruno in Las Vegas seven years ago. The youngest heavyweight champion in history, Tyson was only 22.

Around 95 per cent of British punters betting on tomorrow's World Boxing Council heavyweight fight in Las Vegas are backing Frank Bruno to successfully defend his title against Mike Tyson. These betters are backing their patriotism with money as William Hill anticipate record takings.

The company have taken several big-money bets, including one of £50,000 for Tyson, but the vast majority are for up to £100 and are going on Bruno.

Hills make Tyson 1-5 favourite with Bruno at 10-3, while rival company Ladbrokes currently have Bruno the 3-1

Bruno v Tyson

	Age	29
17st 9lb	Weight	15st 10lb
6ft 3in	Height	5ft 11 1/2in
82in	Reach	73in
27in	Chest	43in
29in	Expendited	24in
27in	Biceps	12in
34in	Forearm	10in
34in	Waist	34in
23.5in	Thigh	27in
30in	Calf	9in
19.5in	Neck	16 1/2in
10in	Wrist	8in
14in	Flat	13in
9in	Ankle	11in
4in	Figures	7in
40/4	Wrestle	40in
38	Stoppages	37
13	Boxed KOs	19
1/3	World titles	10/1

was locked up for a long period and didn't fight for almost four years. That's an awful long time in the life of a fighter."

Futch is unimpressed by reports of Tyson's successes in sparring. "The gym and the

ring are different places," he said. "Fighters wear a headguard in the gym and the gloves are heavier. They don't feel the full impact of punches so it can be a place of false impressions."

Tyson takes a good shot but a renewal of the experience could come as a terrible shock.

"I think so," Futch added, "but it's not as important as obvious flaws in timing. You couldn't learn very much from the couple of minutes Tyson was in with Peter McNeeley but quite a lot when he then fought 'Buster' Mathis. The fact that Tyson missed with so many punches suggests that his reflexes are nothing like what they were when he was unquestionably the most devastating hitter since Joe Louis."

In boxing, sharp reflexes are as important to defence as they are to the pressing home of attacks, particularly in Tyson's

case because he is usually at a disadvantage in reach. It was the way Tyson moved his head when coming forward, the disconcerting roll of powerful shoulders that made him so difficult to hit. "He doesn't appear to be as successful with that anymore and I think it's all to do with dulled reflexes," Futch said.

Shortly before attending a dinner held in New York this week that coincided with the 25th anniversary of an epic contest between Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier, the veteran trainer spoke with Bruno and was impressed by his confidence.

"Bruno led me to believe that he can beat Tyson," he said this week at his home in Las Vegas.

It is not simply that Futch sees more self-esteem in Bruno.

"The fact of being champion will have improved his confidence. He's a big guy with a powerful jab and showed against Oliver

McCall that he has learned how to hold and hang on in a crisis."

The prediction here is that a crisis will come quickly. The idea of pacing a fight has never appealed to Tyson. A favorite expression is that he is full of bad intentions.

Some recent events have put a strain on the process but logic suggests that Tyson will send Bruno into history before the scheduled 12 rounds are completed. Whatever chance the British hero has of victory rests with how well he performs in the early rounds, how he copes with the barrage of hooks and uppercuts Tyson is sure to unleash from the opening bell.

"I've never known Frank be so full of himself before a fight and he's going to cause a great shock, end one of the most famous careers in boxing because when he gets through with this there will be nowhere for Tyson to go," Bruno's trainer, George Francis, said.

Upon being acquainted with this bellicose statement Tyson's chief advisors, John Horne and Roy Holloway, wore expressions of amusement. "It's all over for the champion," Holloway said. On the basis that Tyson may not be what he was but Bruno probably is, I find it impossible to make a case for the popular challenger. The forecast is Tyson in five, maybe earlier.

British boxing punters prove patriotic

underdog with Tyson quoted at 2-9 to repeat his victory from the pair's first encounter.

Ian Wassell, of Ladbrokes, said: "Frank is as popular in the betting shop as he is with the British public at large. We've taken bets of up to £2,000 on Bruno and many thousands of £5 and £10 flutters.

"This is building up into the busiest betting fight ever and we expect over £1.0m to be wagered across the betting industry. The previous record was for Tyson-Bruno I."

Ladbrokes are refusing to quote odds on Naseem Hamed retaining his World Boxing Organisation featherweight

title tonight in Glasgow. "Naseem is so good the odds we would offer would make it impossible for people to win money on him in a betting shop because of the betting tax," Wassell explained.

Hamed's opponent, Said Lawal, of Nigeria, is quoted at 14-1 to win.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 2936, Saturday 16 March

By Mass

ACROSS

- Suitable place for house parties? (10)
- Those with convictions in press or in novel form (9)
- In the place of depravity (4)
- Fancy hat, daughter's lost piece (6)
- Extra port - port for the starter (8)
- Feed on secure boards (6)
- Top university in sport? (7)
- It could be (8)
- Dispose of a bond? (8)
- Chance blow needs doctor called in (6)
- Cross about closure? This should prevent it (8)
- A member of the Labour Party out East? (6)
- Endless material evoking the Tudors, say (4)
- Aggressor, idiot, giving trouble to worker (9)
- Object about inferior railing (10)

The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle opened next Thursday remain unclaimed copies of the Larousse Dictionary of Literary Characters. Answers and winners' names will be published next Saturday and solutions to Saturday Crossword, P.O. Box 4016, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5BL. Please use the box number and postcode and give your own postcode. Last week's winners: Wendy Miles, Stevenage; Mary Lewis, Bristol; J. Kennedy, Kent; George Howe, Cardiff; Vicki Vines, Buntingstall.

Friday's solution Last Saturday's solution

DEPOSITIONSHIP DEBACLE SCRAPER
AHAACAR RAILVEAE
CARPITS TALLYHO ABSTINENT DELTA
AATIMODAS GTESTNIMMS
LOCALITIME ANNIE ONION INQUIRIES
HANAKL NOSTIN
SPURGALLANTRY UNDERGRADUATES
HIBERNATE BISB
OVERPOWERED BRITISH
PALEOZOIC BIRMINGHAM
TALONLANDAGENT CATHEDRAL
SIFGGRIC HERESIES
TRESPASLAGGING OWNER FRONTLINE
ODSREENE USER RUMES
PEEPYESTERYEAR TUESDAY FARNEST

DOWN

- Decoration obtained by POs in a spot? (9)
- Right! Left - What a fight! (4)
- Thanks - flute playing is aesthetic (8)
- Engross and split first of tenors (5)
- Expose Northern character in old city? (7)
- Name all characters in vault getting rapt! (10)
- Striker hits upright (6)
- Feel sore taken in by salesman's displays (10)
- Sal's at home in a shanty (6)
- Set off for college in time (8)
- Nutty dessert is hot (7)
- Thwart one from SE Europe (6)
- Fools set up, including English mug (5)
- Drink excited right away (4)

Megson angry at double sale

Football
GUY HODGSON

Robert Chase's ability to lose staff could become apparent again next week after Norwich City's manager, Gary Megson, strongly criticised the club for selling Ashley Ward and Jon Newsome. He did not say he was leaving but after his comments, that might have been superfluous.

Megson joined Sheffield Wednesday for £1.5m yesterday while Ward, Norwich's top scorer, signed for First Division leaders Derby, after the two clubs agreed a £1m fee. However, Megson, their fourth manager in two years, was left "flobbergasted and furious" by the transfers.

"I didn't sanction the moves and I am not party to either transfer," he said. "Every team below us is doing its utmost to ensure its survival. The team and I are getting no help from the boardroom and we don't expect them to be a hindrance. The last person out of the 32 professionals I would ever recommend to sell is Ashley Ward."

Chase, who has been under pressure from fans to quit the club since before last season's

relegation from the Premier

league, said they had agreed to sell the two 25-year-old players to help cut a £4.5m debt.

"We must be prepared to reduce our borrowing to a level we can afford and which the bank is comfortable with," he said. "It is probably most painful decision I have had to make since being chairman of the football club."

Notts County's manager, Colin Murphy, and defender Shann

Murphy were yesterday charged by the Football Association with bringing the game into disrepute after a fracas in the Blackpool tunnel last Saturday. They have 14 days to contest the charge for an incident which involved players, match officials and stewards.

Vinnie Jones has been in

cluded in the Wales get-together in Newport, from 24 to 27 April. Ian Rush is to be left out. The manager, Bobby Gould, who announced a match against Switzerland in Lugano on 24 April, said the session would be a "getting to know you" exercise.

■ Premiership clubs will observe a minute's silence as a mark of respect for those who died at Dunblane.

Glenn Moore talks to

Mike Walker, page 28

Llewellyn move blocked by WRU

Rugby Union
ROBERT COLE

The Welsh Rugby Union yesterday threw out Gareth Llewellyn's request to transfer from Neath to Harlequins, and was immediately told it will almost certainly face a legal challenge from the London club.

Llewellyn has signed to join Quins next season but the WRU maintains he was not resident in England on 1 March and therefore does not meet the

International Rugby Football Board residency qualifications for players seeking to play under a different Union.

It means Vernon Pugh and his compatriots could soon find themselves fighting on two legal fronts, as their senior clubs have already threatened to sue their governing body in their protracted battle over European Cup funding and next season's domestic programme.

While Llewellyn was restricting himself to a diplomatic "I am preparing for a very important international, I will comment next week," the WRU can brace themselves for a major test-case battle.

The WRU stresses it is merely sticking to the IRFB regulations, though it did add the rider that "the decision was taken with the aim of preserving the strength of domestic Welsh rugby."

Tony Hallett, the RFU secretary, said: "The RFU will stand by Harlequins. The RFU's position is that it is mindful of international board regulations, but it is equally mindful of the Treaty of Rome and restraint of trade. Which has the greater authority?"

Dick Best, Harlequins' director of rugby, said: "If necessary, we will issue a writ against the Welsh Rugby Union. We envisaged something like this would happen."

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It's not just Bruno that should be alarmed.

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